THE

ADVENTURES

OF

RALPH REYBRIDGE:

CONTAINING

SKETCHES

OF

MODERN CHARACTERS, MANNERS,

AND EDUCATION.

BY

WILLIAM LINLEY, ESQ.

The ways of Heav'n are dark and intricate,
Puzzled with mazes, and perplex'd with errors,
Our understanding traces them in vain,
Lost and bewilder'd in the fruitless search,
Nor sees with how much art the windings run,
Nor where the regular confusion ends. ADDISON.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR RICHARD PHILLIPS,

BRIDGE-STREET, BLACKFRIARS.

1809.

Serfoji Rajah 1827

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S ... TANJORE MAHAL

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RALPH REYBRIDGE.

CHAP. I.

A Salmagundi.

To those of my worthy readers who may be disposed to find fault with the introductory chapters of these volumes, I beg leave to refer them to the first of the fifth book of Tom Jones, in which these digressive essays are so judiciously, wittily, and learnedly defended. Indeed, it must be allowed, that what is therein alleged, in support of the policy and propriety of introducing *contrast* on every occasion, is indisputable, and may every day be illustrated by example. For instance: the blooming Miss of eighteen,

who takes her station at an assembly by the freckled Miss of thirty; or the battered beau who avoids a red coat and a cockade, to crack his jokes on old square-toes, are undeniable proofs of its efficacy.

Now, in all literary productions, it is no less certain that a foil is frequently very necessary to set off a beauty, and that the light and shade ought to be as artificially blended with the pen of the poet as the pencil of the painter. In both cases, however, they should be delicately laid on, particularly the shade; in other words, though *my* introductory chapters are meant to extend no further than to put my worthy reader in a doze, from which he may start to pursue, with renovated vigour and resolution, the thread of my story; yet I by no means wish "to shut him up," as Shakspeare has it, "in measureless content," by too long-winded a soporic; for who knows if in that case he would ever wake again; or, if he did, that he would ever think again of the fair,

side of my book, but only on that tedious humdrum chapter that gave him the gapes and the head-ache, and sent him to bed?

As in the first volume of this history I have contented myself with keeping my hero and his satellites in a very confined sphere, so in the following he will have to undergo as many changes of scene and variety of adventures as Hercules himself, and will require almost as much strength and fortitude to subdue their attendant vexations and disappointments; but it will be remembered that I have been gradually preparing him for this fiery ordeal, and that if he does not weather every gale (not to mention those he may meet with on the high seas), it will not be my fault.

"*Cœlum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt,*" says the poet;—but authors who, *trans mare scribunt*, must be a little attentive to local circumstances, especially if they happen to write from

their own, and not the experience of others. Our sagacious readers must not therefore expect, when we have transported them (which we shortly mean to do by the force of our necromancy) to the torrid regions of Asia, adventures in stage-coaches, coffee-houses, prisons, and playhouses; but, on the other hand, if we happen to place them upon the back of an elephant, or the pinnacle of a pagoda, we hope they will keep their tempers with us, especially as we promise to land both them and our hero again on their own shores.

And now, as I think it probable that the thermometer of the most considerate reader's attention may be, by this time, about *nodding* point, I shall bring this chapter, and I hope not inappositely, to a conclusion.

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CHAP. II.

Our hero fights a stout battle with the Devil, in a stage coach, and overcomes him.—He contracts the first friendship of youth; arrives at Portsmouth, and gets initiated into some of the mysteries of that famous town.

I REMEMBER to have asked a very whimsical, but confidential friend of mine, who happened to call upon me while I was employed in the rough sketch of the present work, how I should begin the first chapter of my second volume, as I was about to introduce therein a vast variety of *new* scenes and *new* characters?—"How begin it?" cried my friend; after taking up some of the loose sheets of the first volume, and running his eye over them, "why, with a *new* pen to be sure." I

acknowledged the importance of his advice, which I observed he meant should be understood literally, as well as metaphorically, for the scrawls he had been attempting to make out afforded him no more information than if they had been the Sibyl's leaves. But, happy is it for us authors of the illegible quill, that, by the decyphering powers and dexterous exertions of our common friend the Printer's Devil, each mis-shapened character is placed upon a par with the most elegant penmanship.

In the coach with our hero were a Quaker and his wife, and a pale, but interesting young man in a kind of uniform. Our youth, naturally diffident, was in no hurry to begin the conversation; nor did his fellow-travellers seem to be of the talkative breed, for the coach had gone on with them twenty miles ere a syllable was uttered on either side. At length, the man of peace (though it was by no means his province to begin) exclaimed,

as he tied a silk handkerchief round his neck, "Verily the spirit moveth me unto slumber," and turning his head, as though it had been placed on a pivot, towards his wife, "and Sarah, my spouse, I would advise thee also to refresh thy body by sleep, if, peradventure, the motion of this machine will allow it unto thee." Thus saying he fell back without further ceremony, and in the course of a few minutes gave very sonorous proofs that he had forgotten he was in a stage-coach with a very young and pretty wife, and two very handsome young men. The lady, however, whose ideas were not altogether quite so spiritual as honest Ephraim's, and who, from his first entrance, had regarded our youthful hero with peculiar complacency, now gently disengaging her hand from the arm of her beloved, where it had hitherto been dutifully and affectionately lodged, she began to fan herself with infinite address, at the same time to make some pertinent

observations on the inconveniences of stage-coaches, the bad accommodations, on the road, and the varieties of imposition; all which remarks were submitted so directly to Ralph, who sat opposite to her, that he could not avoid replying to them, and this he did in a very civil and respectful manner. But the partner of Ephraim's bosom had conceived warmer expectations than were to be satisfied by civility and respect. Finding, therefore, that the music of her tongue had no effect upon the heart of our hero, she proceeded to the more powerful attractives of sighs, languishes, and ogles; and a very bright moon assisting her operations, she proceeded so far as to let a very fair and soft hand *accidentally* fall upon one of his, giving it at the same time so gentle a pressure, that poor Ralph, who, virtuously disposed as he was, was still made of flesh and blood, began to tremble at the danger he was in; but he recollected that the worthy Quaker had saluted the fair seducer

by the appellation of *spouse*, and he no longer doubted the strength of his resolutions.

The justly astonished and incensed lady finding, therefore, all her attacks ineffectual, and being wholly dispirited and abashed at such very extraordinary conduct in so young a man, muttered something about "Idiot and whipper-snapper," returned her fair hand to the arm of her faithful Ephraim, and reclining her head lovingly on his shoulder, soon joined, though in far softer notes, her husband's nasal melody.

In the mean time, Reybridge, who in the general appearance of his juvenile companion found something extremely interesting, took occasion to commence a conversation with him, and was delighted with the justness of his observations and the sprightly affability of his manners. He was still more agreeably surprized, when he understood that his young companion was to be his messmate on board

the Phœnix, and that he was going out as a cadet in the Company's service.

Where there is similarity of character in any one respect among young men, it is sufficient to substantiate friendship; and thus it was with Ralph and his fellow passenger, who, long before their arrival at Portsmouth, were become a second Pylades and Orestes.

The father of this young gentleman, whose name was Sefton, was a respectable haberdasher at Ipswich. Thomas, our hero, being an only son, was sent to a public school, that he might receive the education *of a gentleman*; and, though of a fragile frame, and a delicate constitution, his deluded parents could not resist a proposal that was made to send him out a cadet to India; the more especially as Mrs. Sefton had an only brother, a Captain Penrose, on the Madras establishment, who would be able to push him forward in every possible way.

There is nothing so fatal to the hap-

piness of the individual, and the interests of society in general, as the false pride that so frequently results from tolerable success in trade. After the honest grocer has given his darling son the education of a gentleman, it becomes necessary that he should purchase for him the profession of one; but the good man does not consider, that by thus inflating his child's mind with visions of independence and distinction, which for want of money and interest can never be realized, he is preparing for him the stings of disappointment, neglect, and contempt! For there are these who take a pride in the misery of their fellow-creatures; and to such wretches the *quick sensibility* of the offspring of figs and brown sugar would be a source of perpetual amusement; whilst the degraded youth wishes, when it is too late, that he had stuck to his till, and been contented with the reputation of an honest man and a good citizen.

Young Sefton had little pride in him

by nature; but, in proportion as he began to talk and write better English than his neighbouring friends, and become accustomed to the terms of scholar and gentlemanly young man, a gentleman it was determined he should be.—"Such talents," cried the father, "ought not to be hid under a bushel!"—"And, indeed, my Tommy will win all hearts, when he has got his red coat and his cockade!" adds the mother.

The coach arrived early in the morning at Portsmouth, and Reybridge and his friends took up their quarters at the George Inn. Ralph was astonished at the uproar and confusion in the coffee-room, but Sefton, who, though not much older than our hero, had seen more of a town life, was not in the least discomposed by it, but seeing a box for himself and his friend, ordered breakfast. Whilst it was preparing, a bustling little man entered the coffee-room. He had spectacles on, and a bundle of papers in his hand; in

short, his whole appearance denoted the man of business and importance. In a moment he was surrounded by almost every person in the room. "Well, Mr. Furbish," cries one, "when do we sail?" "Any counter orders from the India House?" enquires another. "Need we go on board before to-morrow?" asks a third. "It is impossible to say, gentlemen!" replied the little man, "utterly impossible to say, there is no knowing. —We have a thousand things to think of. —We mayn't be off this week, and we may weigh anchor within an hour!—My letters are very *dubious* indeed!—All I can say is, that I am ordered to be in readiness, and may go on board to-night." The little man then called hastily for a glass of negus, and then hurried out of the room with as much bustle and self-importance as he had hurried into it.

Every body now appeared to be in the greatest confusion. It was in a moment "Waiter, bring a bill?"—"Waiter,

where's my room?"—"Waiter, where did they put my trunks?"—"Waiter, how's the wind?" In short, nothing could exceed the consternation that sat on every feature, in consequence of the awful warnings of Mr. Furbish. Our two adventurers, among the rest, began to be alarmed, and were about to join in the general bustle, when they were detained by an old gentleman in a naval uniform who sat in the next box. "Don't be frightened," said he, "my young friends, by what that little busy body, Tom Furbish has been saying. Tom has been at this work now for the last twenty years. Importance is his idol; and he does not care who thinks him of consequence, provided he be thought of consequence by somebody. To gratify this absurd weakness, he, by dint of some interest, and a little ready money, got appointed purser of a man of war a long time ago; and has contrived since to shift his flag (alias his slops) into every ship that has hap-

pened to be appointed the convoy of East Indiamen out of the Channel, on purpose to have the ear of the captain; and to enjoy the delight of being looked up to as the *oracle* of intelligence on the subject you have just heard him sputter so rapidly upon. But the truth of the matter is, he knows no more about the business than you do."—"I do not so much wonder, Sir," replied our hero, "at the delight Mr. Furbish receives in being thought a person of so much consequence, as I am surprized at the pains so many people appear to be taking to multiply each other's anxieties. Surely, if there be any uncertainty as to the sailing of the fleet, it would be wiser for them to go on board their respective ships at once, where they would at least enjoy the comfort of security; but, in my opinion, the place itself would be preferable to a noisy inn, where they are subjected to losses, impositions, and inattentions of various kinds." "You are a philosopher I perceive, my

young friend," replied the gentleman, "and can fly to the resources of your own mind for amusement, without launching continually into the busy scenes of life for it. You may, therefore, enjoy yourself as well on board ship as on shore: but this is not the case with the vulgar, the ignorant, and the dissolute. Debarred, accidentally, as in the present instance, from their usual riotous and licentious pursuits, the mind becomes irritable, and to drive away the fiend reflection, and to prevent being left to their own thoughts, they are glad to encounter even care, anxiety, and vexation. I do not mean to apply this to our worthy friends here about us in particular; some of whom I know to be neither vulgar, uninformed or depraved; but there are beings in the world who, without these vices, are weak enough to be led away by novelty and custom, and frequently do things they dislike, because they do not choose to be thought *singular*. Upon this false prin-

ciple many a man of talent has degraded it among fools, and the most virtuous have been seduced to mingle with the most vicious. And now, young gentlemen, I can tell you, from pretty good authority, that the fleet will certainly sail to-morrow evening about six o'clock, and not before: if you go on board, therefore, at any hour to-morrow in the forenoon, you will have plenty of time to look about you, for I shall not point the signal for getting under weigh much before five." Commodore Northerton (for it was no less a man than the noble captain of the Vengeance himself) then arose, and with great dignity walked away, leaving Reybridge and Sefton not more delighted with the mildness, condescension, and good sense, than the majestic demeanor of the venerable chief.

The two friends, who every moment became more and more attached to each other, now called for a bill, and having bespoke a private room to dine in, took a

stroll round the fortifications, with which our hero was wonderfully pleased. Indeed, every thing appeared so new to him, who had never, except for a day or two, wandered from his Shrewsbury friends, that Sefton was almost as much amused by his remarks and notes of exclamation, as was Ralph himself at the objects that excited them.

CHAP. III.

In which our hero is further initiated into the mysteries of Portsmouth, and undergoes many alarming adventures.—The first friendship of youth dissolved.

On their return to the George, Sefton was agreeably surprized to find three of his young London friends sitting in the room he had bespoken. It appeared that they had clubbed together for a post-chaise on purpose to see him once more, having been prevailed upon by Mr. Bampton, the eldest of the three, who was under the necessity of joining his ship at Spithead. "'Tis true, upon my soul, my dear Tom!" exclaimed Bampton, after one of the young men had explained—"but I had some difficulty to make the varlets obey orders. But, you rogue, what have you

bespoke for dinner? I long to drink a bumper to your success, and then I hope you will fill one to mine, for I expect to be promoted to a lieutenancy in three or four months."

Sefton having given orders for an increase to the bill of fare, introduced our hero to the midshipman and his companions; but Ralph was soon convinced that they fell far short of Sefton both in manners and conversation, and was more surprized than pleased, that his friend should profess to esteem men who had little, save their persons and their assurance, to recommend them. Bampton, who had from his infancy been educated in the school of licentiousness, but was at the same time not destitute of good nature, soon set our hero down for a *queer fish*, and took an opportunity of telling Sefton so.

The cadet, though intelligent, sensible, and of good principles, was rather inclined to waggery, and the temptation was

never so irresistible as after he had got a little wine in his head. The bottle had circulated pretty freely at dinner, and though Ralph's former irregularities, under the tuition of Mr. Valpine, had enabled him to sit it out with the best of them, yet he remembered the good resolutions he had since made, and, to avoid being pressed, withdrew soon after the cloth was removed.

Sefton felt a little mortified at this flinching, and was therefore easily prevailed upon by Bampton, and the other two, to join in a *quizzing* scheme against him; especially as it was not to be attended with any serious inconvenience to any body. No sooner was the plan determined upon, than the party broke up; and coffee and tea being called for, Reybridge, who heard the summons, returned, making apologies for his absence, and pleading his inability to bear more than a certain quantity of wine. His excuse was admitted, and a proposal immediately made by the

midshipman, that they should all adjourn to the playhouse. Reybridge seconded the motion, for he observed by the bills, that the performance was to be King Lear, a play he had frequently perused, when at Stoke Hill, with renewed delight, and in the representation of which he anticipated the highest gratification. The party accordingly sallied forth, Bampton, who was well acquainted with every avenue and blind alley of the place, leading the way. At the conclusion of the entertainment, the young party withdrew into the lobby, where they were joined by Bampton, who said he had been to order a supper at the George, and to procure beds for himself and his companions, which he had neglected to do before. Our hero, who had observed this facetious gentleman's winks as he quitted the box, and was not without apprehensions of a new trick, appeared satisfied with this explanation, and they all proceeded together towards the lobby passage. But by this

time it was so crowded, and the meeting tides of people, chiefly of the female sex, so blocked up the way, and separated parties from each other, that our hero, notwithstanding his utmost exertions, soon lost sight of his companions, and was left to buffet a sea of confusion, and to hear, on all sides of him, bursts of rude laughter, obscenity, and profaneness. Whilst he was thus hustled to and fro, he came in contact with a very pretty modest-looking young woman, whose eyes were wandering over the lobby, as if in search of some friend she had lost in the crowd, and whose countenance strongly evinced the greatest anxiety and terror. Reybridge, moved by her apparent distress, which he naturally concluded was occasioned by her having lost her protector in the crowd, very delicately inquired the cause of her alarm, and if he could be of any assistance to her. "Oh! Sir," replied the young lady, "you are very good. I am, indeed, in the greatest fright ima-

ginable.—My brother, who prevailed upon me to accompany him to this shocking place, has, some how or another, been separated from me, and how to get home without being insulted by rakes and naughty women, I know not."—"I beg, madam," replied Ralph, "you will be under no further apprehensions on that account. Allow me the honour of escorting you home, and I will defend you from every molestation of the kind, at the hazard of my life."—"Really, Sir," returned the fair lady, "I am infinitely indebted to you for your gallant offer. Indeed," added she, darting upon our hero a soft smile, "I could expect no less from a gentleman of your appearance; and yet, Sir, from a perfect stranger, how can I with propriety accept of protection, in a situation too so critical?—What will my brother say?" Here the lady endeavoured to conceal her blushes, and Ralph replied, "I own, madam, that the alternative is rather unpleasant, but it seems the only

safe one at present to be adopted."—— "Well, Sir," returned the fair distressed, "you look and speak so much like the gentleman, and man of fashion, that I believe I must venture to trust myself with you." So saying, with a gentle timidity, she accepted the arm that was tendered to her, and was conducted by our hero into the street. It was now the lady's turn to conduct the gentleman, which she did a few paces only from the theatre, and knocked at the door of a house which appeared, indeed, to be attached to it. Reybridge could not avoid admiring the extreme delicacy of his fair charge, who had been so terrified at the idea of going alone even so short a distance. And now, the door being opened, would have taken his leave, but was pressed in so earnest a manner to walk in and take some refreshment, that it was impossible for him, consistently with good breeding, to refuse. The first object that a little startled him on entering the house, was the drab

who opened the door, the fumes from whose mouth, as she preceded her mistress, up a narrow dirty stair case, descended to the nostrils of Ralph with a force and poignancy that would have kindled fire in a tinder-box. The next subject of alarm was the chamber into which he followed the young lady, and in which was a bed, and upon a table intended for a toilette, a paraphernalia worthy of that Chloe herself so justly celebrated by the merry Dean of St. Patrick's. At sight of this apparatus, Reybridge drew back: but, as there was a fire lighted, a cloth laid for supper, and his fair guide took no notice of the furniture in question, he did not seem to observe it himself, expecting every moment that she would summon the servant to inquire for her brother.

In the mean time, the lady having taken off her hat and cloak, and placed her chair rather closer to our hero's than, considering the criticalness of her situ-

sion, was altogether so prudent. "Well, Sir," said she in a sort of whisper, "I am prodigiously obliged to you for coming home with me—I am indeed. As for that *rantipole* fellow, my brother, I suppose he'll not be at home yet this hour; for, to tell you the truth, Sir, whenever he goes to the play, he is such a devil after the ——— ; I say, Sir, he is a terrible wild young man, and not to be kept within tolerable bounds sometimes." Poor Ralph was completely taken aback by this delicate intimation, and beginning to suspect foul play, resolved to be convinced at once: turning, therefore, rather abruptly to his fair companion, he asked her if she was aware that she had conducted him to her bed-chamber?"——"Alas! Sir," replied the lady, calling up her blushes, and endeavouring vainly to suppress her tears;—"I confess the weakness of my heart!—I saw you during the play, and your animated countenance and graceful form made so sudden a con-

quest of my *virgin* affections, that rebellious passion was not to be controlled! Oh! then forgive my fears, spare my blushes, and have pity on a maid, who dies, if you resign her to the cruel pangs of disappointed love!"—Then, falling on her knees, she grasped our hero's hand, and we know not how far such tender rhetoric might have prevailed, had not the beautiful pleader been interrupted by the entrance of the hag we have before described. "Misses," croaked she, in a voice scarcely human, "here's the navy gentleman below, that was here last night:—he says he has redeemed the petticoat, and left it at Misses Glynn's for you, and would have been with you tonight, but is obliged to go board ship—shall I say any thing to him?"—"Yes," cried the prostrate fair, starting from her knees, and suddenly resuming her natural voice and gesture, "tell him he may go and be d——d!" This nervous denunciation was succeeded by a violent burst of

laughter from an adjoining closet; and, whilst Reybridge stood stupified with astonishment and indignation, Bampton and his associates made their appearance. Ralph waited very calmly till the laugh at him was over, in which the love-sick *virgin* very cordially joined; then, turning to Sefton, who was a little confused at the fine glow of reproach which had spread itself over his friend's cheeks, "I most heartily congratulate you, Sir, and your very facetious friends, on the full success of your pleasant frolic. The lady has executed her part to a nicety, and will, no doubt, meet with that reward to which she is so justly entitled, namely, a continuation of your favour and protection."

Our hero was now walking away, when Sefton, very much shocked at the offence thus taken, ran to detain him. "Surely," cried he "my dear Reybridge, you will not take up this foolish business so seriously?—Upon my soul I

thought you would have been the first to laugh at the discovery, or, believe me, I would, on no account, have acquiesced in the plot."—"It may be so, Sir," replied Ralph, "and I am ready, on the presumption that no offence was intended, to pass it over. But, Mr. Sefton, with all that thoughtlessness and levity of disposition which is observable in your character, I conceived it above premeditated licentiousness, and you must excuse me, if, without bearing you any ill-will, I decline the friendship of a man, who, to gratify a ridiculous freak, will not scruple to encourage, in their deplorable profession, the most necessitous, pitiable, and miserable of human beings." Thus saying, he hurried out of the room, and returned to the George, fully determined to go on board his ship by day-break on the following morning.

CHAP. IV.

Ralph goes on board.—The order, neatness, and regularity of an East Indiaman getting under weigh.—Verbum sat.—Sefton and Ralph come on board with the captain.—"All hands to the anchor," and "farewell to Old England!"

It is not easy to impress upon the mind a detestation of vices, the consequences of which have not been enforced by example. Experience is absolutely necessary to discrimination on this head; and a man, to feel the highest gratification and pride in a steady adherence to virtue, must himself have suffered from folly and indiscretion, and seen their baneful effects upon others. Our hero had undergone the greatest troubles, disappointments, and anxieties from his former follies, and he now recol-

lected with disgust the transient pleasures he had yielded to, and that they could, even for a moment, have called off his attention from the rational and virtuous plan of life he had laid down for himself. In his loosest moments, however, he had never degraded himself by a vicious intercourse with women. Mr. Denham's admonitions on this subject had, indeed, been so strict; the deplorable consequences, both to the mind and body, had been so emphatically and truly pointed out, and expatiated upon, that the impression had never for an instant lost its full force upon his mind.

That Sefton conceived the society of these unfortunate women no self-degradation, seemed pretty evident from the events contained in the foregoing Chapter, and Reybridge could not bring himself to take to his confidence again a youth he no longer respected either for purity of principle, or elegance of mind.

Such were Ralph's reflections when he

retired to bed; and he arose early the next morning, strengthened in his determination to behave to Sefton, thenceforward, with civility only. Had he known more of the world, or had he continued a little longer under the tuition of Mr. Valpine; had he even paid three or four more visits to the capital, during his career of dissipation, he would have discovered that custom had long reconciled sentiment and depravity together, and that it was no uncommon thing for men of the highest talents, the soundest judgment, and the most benevolent propensities, to fly from "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" to a Covent Garden bagnio. He would have been let into still stranger secrets:—he would have seen them, under the mask of these virtues and accomplishments, debauching their friends' wives and daughters, to the destruction of domestic happiness, maintaining all religion to be hypocrisy, yet still walking boldly in the circles of society, the envy of their own sex, the

idol of the women, and the leaders of fashion!

On his arrival on board the Phœnix at the Mother-Bank, our hero was astonished to find the ship in as great a confusion as if she had but just dropped down the river to Gravesend. Trunks, parcels, chests, &c. &c. were indiscriminately scattered about the quarter-deck; some with the directions torn off; others with the locks beat to pieces, and all in such a condition that the owners themselves could only guess at their property. The sailors, instead of being employed in the necessary preparations for sailing, were half of them busy in stowing away butts of water in the hold, whilst others were securing the captain's live stock on the poop and forecastle. Below, in the steerage, the carpenter, joiner, and their mates, were *knocking up*, as it is termed, the officers' and passengers' cabins, and with as much unconcern as if they would not be wanted for a month; and the few already

finished, were filled so full of trunks and boxes of different descriptions, that to enter them was impracticable.

When inconvenience is accidental and unavoidable, all complaint on the part of the sufferer will only be a proof of his weakness and irresolution; but, when it is the effect of indolence and inattention, it is not so patiently to be tolerated. In the instance before us, it can be owing solely to neglect; for there is no reason whatever to be given, why these ships may not, at all times, be clean, and ready for sea, a week or a fortnight previously to their sailing, as the company's cargo, and the captain's and officers' investments, are always laid in in the river. But setting aside the trouble and vexation thus unjustly experienced by the poor passengers, who certainly have a right to expect every possible accommodation, the most fatal consequences may reasonably be expected to attend every ship going to sea in a disorderly state. In the English

Channel gales of wind spring up, at certain seasons of the year, equally violent and unexpected! What, then, but broken limbs can ensue when chests, trunks, and lumber of all kind, are rolling about the decks? not to mention the check which a vessel always experiences in her way through the water, from not being clear between the decks, and otherwise neatly trimmed. Besides, in a gale of wind, how is a ship to be worked with obstructions on all sides? What, but the most dangerous confusion, must be the consequence? While Reybridge was in the steerage, looking in vain for the cabin (or rather hole) which his friend Mr. Horton had told him Captain Daventry intended for his accommodation, a young man, in a ragged jacket, and with a face and hands begrimed with filth of all kinds, ran up to him, and asked him if he was looking for any thing, and if he could be of any assistance to him? "I thank you, my lad," replied Ralph, "I should be glad to know

which is my cabin, that I may put my trunk into it; and if you'll lend me a helping hand, you shall have a glass of grog for your pains, when I can come at my liquor case." At this proposal the other burst into a fit of laughter, and addressing a midshipman that was near him, "Mr. Powell," said he, "after you have seen those sails stowed, pay attention to this gentleman." So saying, without waiting for a reply, he jumped nimbly down the after-hatchway, and was out of sight in a moment. Ralph, understanding by his speech to the midshipman, that he was an officer of the ship, was a little confused at the mistake he had made, but he was still more astonished when he found, upon inquiry, that his liberal promise of a glass of grog had been extended to the Hon. Mr. D——, the youngest son of the Earl of H——! and that he was the third mate of the ship. No sooner, therefore, did this young gentleman again make his appearance, than our hero approached, and

apologized to him in the handsomest manner for the impropriety he had been guilty of. Mr. D— received his excuse with great good humour, and understanding he was a passenger at the captain's table, introduced him to the chief officer, by whose interest Ralph soon found himself in possession of a clear, though not a very clean, cabin, next the purser's. Here, then, having deposited and secured his trunks, &c. as well as he could, with the assistance of the midshipman Mr. D—— had ordered to attend him, and one of the sailors, he returned to the quarter-deck. The bustle was now greater than ever, for the Commodore had given the signal for getting under weigh, and he was glad to escape from the tumult this circumstance occasioned, by taking shelter in the cuddy. Here he found, already seated, an elderly and a very young lady, and three young men apparently about his own age. In a few minutes the noise increased on the deck, and the boatswain's whistle an-

nounced the arrival of the captain's cutter alongside, with Captain Daventry, his clerk, the purser, the doctor, and young Sefton on board. In a minute the bars were fitted to the capstern, the sails loosened, and every preparation made for getting under weigh. The wind blowing favourably at N.E. the fleet was presently in motion, to the great admiration of Ralph, to whom the whole scene was perfectly novel, and of which he had not even formed an idea. The rippling of the sea, as the ship cut through it, the gradual recession from the land, and the steady song of the helm's-man, inspired him with the most delightful sensations.

His new friend Mr. D— now introduced him, at his own desire, to Captain Daventry, to whom he delivered the order which was the captain's authority for receiving him on board. Ralph was a little awed by the outward form of the captain, which bespoke the hardy seaman at all points. His countenance, it is true,

had been a little roughened by a contention of thirty years with the elements, but there was not a furrow in his cheek that was not characterized by benevolence. The old commander received him accordingly with the smiles of courtesy, and shaking him heartily by the hand—"Somebody told me, Mr. Reybridge," observed he, "that you wore a good outside; and, in truth, if one may judge from your countenance, which is not unfrequently a true index of the mind, we shall have little to object to, when we see what's within."

Captain Daventry was an excellent seaman, a cheerful companion, and an accomplished gentleman; though he did not exactly follow some fashions which I have described. He had all the humour, and frolicksome singularity of an old sailor, without his grossness and profaneness, for he suffered as little swearing as possible on board his ship, and showed particular favour to those of his men who conducted

themselves soberly, decently, and with a due reverence to religion. Even the most abandoned of his crew, who presumed to laugh at, and abuse their captain, for pretending not to love a little *smut*, sometimes were, nevertheless, the first to exult in his approbation as seamen, and shrink trembling from his reproach. And thus it is that Virtue, in whatever garb she appears, still carries with her that sacred talisman which, though it cannot command an imitation of her precepts, will oblige the most abandoned of the slaves of vice to respect them. To these qualifications of the captain may be added a mild and amicable disposition, united, however, to great courage and resolution, and an understanding ample and acute.

In the course of a few days Reybridge, with the assistance of his friend, the third mate, got all his trunks collected, and securely lashed in his cabin. With Sefton he had not yet exchanged more than the bare ceremonies of civility; but his heart,

by nature warm and forgiving, yearned to be once more united to his friends; nor, to all appearances, was Sefton less anxious for a reconciliation; for this young man, although with a mind inferior to our hero's, and with flightier notions of moral propriety, was, nevertheless, his equal in spirit, sensibility, and generosity. He was conscious the more he reflected upon the provocation he had given, in abusing his friend's delicacy and inexperience, and making him the laughing-stock of strangers, infinitely beneath him in every personal and mental accomplishment, that he had merited the loss of this amiable friend's respect and affection, and though he despaired of ever being restored to the former, he still hoped, by some future concessions, to regain the latter.

[library stamp]

CHAP. V.

A short account of our hero's messmates.—A very affecting incident.—The danger of placing confidence in cowardice.—Sefton's magnanimity. — The first friendship of youth renewed.

The passengers of the cuddy, besides Ralph and young Sefton, consisted of the following personages: an elderly lady and her niece; a writer in the Honourable Company's service; two cadets; and a lieutenant in charge of recruits. Mrs. Boothby was the better half of an old civilian on the Madras establishment, and was on her passage out to her husband with the daughter of a younger sister, who had married (not quite so fortunately as herself), under her protection. Miss Standen reverting, indeed, to the former

success of her aunt, and feeling a proper pride on the occasion, had determined that it would be better to try the effect of her beauty and accomplishments upon the mahogany visage of a nabob, than to be seen tripping along the streets of London with a band-box under her arm, and for which occupation she had been originally designed. Of these ladies we have, at present, nothing farther to relate, than that less joy would have been probably manifested on their recovery from sea-sickness, could the captain, and the rest of the company, have known that it was the only circumstance that had power to restrain their tongues. No sooner, indeed, had they rendered themselves as comfortable in their cabins as, the kindness and attention of the worthy captain could make them, than they began to murmur their grievances in his ears. The mortifications they endured from the horrid noises and smells of the ship, the scantiness of their accommodations, and other evils too mul-

tifarious to enumerate. This querelous impertinence, Daventry, however, bore in good part, thinking it beneath him (as indeed it was) to pay any other attention to it than by laughing at it. Mr. Vapourley, the writer, was a youth fresh from mamma's apron-string, and had a long time been taught to consider himself as a young man destined to become of great consequence in the world. Master Charley had been first designed for the bar, but the support of a proper establishment in the profession becoming a matter of serious consideration to the old gentleman, his father, and as he had, at that time, the offer made him of a writership to Madras, it was decided, after a long struggle between interest and affection, that the sweet boy should become a great nabob, and return to them, in the course of a few years, with bushels of rupees, and lacks of pagodas in his pocket. Mr. Pring and Mr. Royston were cadets of the same

years with Sefton, but little more can be said of them, than that they were very talkative, very opinionative, very inquisitive, and very young. The lieutenant had seen rough service, and the best that can be said of him was, that he was a good soldier. As to the mates, the doctor, and the purser, who made up the rest of the party at the captain's table, they were neither better nor worse than, with very few exceptions, are to be found at the same posts in other East Indiamen.

So much was it in the power, and so much in the inclination, of Captain Daventry, to give general satisfaction, that even Mrs. Boothby and her fair niece began to find their accommodations more tolerable: the noises were become more familiar, and, of course, not quite so oppressive to their nerves. In short, had not the worthy commander been already married, it is not improbable but that the young lady would have levelled at him

that fatal flying artillery she had so long been preparing for Mr. Secretary *Kist,** Colonel *Ghaut,*† and Counsellor *Punjum.*‡

The commodore, about this time, gave a signal for the fleet to alter its course; the wind, too, coming more a-head, another signal was hoisted to tack, and as this is a manœuvre particularly interesting to a land's-man, when dexterously performed, our hero, Sefton, and the rest of the young men on board, took their stations on the poop, that they might be out of the way, and observe it better.

In a few minutes every ship in the fleet was observed to stand different ways. One, in full sail, brushed across the Phœnix's bow; another cheered her passing close under her stern. In a moment the confusion ceased, and, as if by the powers of magic, each vessel appeared as

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* A revenue term. † A mountain.

‡ A kind of cloth.

before, in her proper station, and pursuing the same course.

At this period a ship passed under the Phœnix's stern, and approached so very near, that our hero, who could form no idea of the power of the helm, and the skill and confidence of the man at the wheel, expressed some alarm in his countenance. Sefton too, and his companions of the cockade, were equally apprehensive of some fatal accident: but poor Mr. Vapourley's consternation was almost insupportable, and he stood trembling on one of the hen-coops without the power of moving or speaking. The formidable cause of this general perturbation brushed, however, along without doing any damage, and Ralph, after the first surprize was over, could not avoid admiring the wonderful powers of mechanism, that could thus enable two men, at a small wheel, to manage and direct with such nicety and precision so immense a body.

The moment the danger was over, Mr. Vapourley, willing to know whether his timidity had been observed, began to recommend the necessity of being collected in perilous situations. "D—n it," observed he, "it looked cursed queer just now, when that ship came so near us. I began to feel rather oddish: but there is nothing like preserving one's resolution; hey, Mr. Reybridge?"—"Certainly, Sir," replied our hero, "presence of mind on such occasions is very necessary but I do not suppose you will be so much alarmed when you have been a little used to such manœuvres."—I alarmed! exclaimed Vapourley; "surely, Sir, you cannot mean to insinuate that I shewed any symptoms of fear?—Why, Sir, was you alarmed?"—"I must own, Sir," rejoined Reybridge, a little contemptuously, "I had some apprehensions; and by *your* trembling, and looking so pale;"—"Trembling!" interrupted the other: "how can you say so, Sir?—Gentlemen, I appeal to you all; did I tremble?—

Mr. Sefton, did you see me tremble?"—"As you have singled me out, Mr. Vapourly," replied Sefton, "to decide this important point, I must say you did; and moreover that you appeared to me to be so violently agitated, that I thought you would have fainted!" Poor Vapourley was utterly confounded by this unexpected confirmation: he however endeavoured to laugh it off. "Faint!" cried he, "ha! ha! ha! Upon my soul that's an excellent joke!—Really, Mr. Sefton, I admire you for that, d——n me if I don't.—But people are apt, we know, to judge of other people's feelings by their own!"—"Well, Sir," retorted Sefton, stalking up to the valiant gentleman, and looking him full in the face: "I do own that I *was* a little alarmed; and I repeat it that *you* were miserably terrified! Yes, Sir, faintingly so, gapingly so! And now, Mr. Vapourley, what have you further to say?"—"Oh! Sir," replied Vapourley, (extremely disconcerted by a rebuff he

had neither language or spirit to parry) "you have, doubtless, every man has, doubtless, a right to form his own judgment. I do not deny that I was a little alarmed, and yet on proper occasions can be as courageous as Hercules. If I did express alarm just now, I assure you it was more for others than myself; and depend upon it, Mr. Sefton, true courage is not shewn either in blustering, swearing, or fighting. Curse me, true courage is a very different kind of a matter; and though, about a fortnight ago, I did happen to wing my old schoolfellow Tom Tamper in a duel, yet d——n me if ever I put a fellow-creature's life to the hazard again, till I have had an opportunity of showing I would, in a good cause, hazard my own to preserve it!" How much longer this truly courageous youth would have continued his harangue cannot be ascertained, as it was interrupted by a very interesting and

extraordinary circumstance. The driver boom on which our hero was sitting, was, by a sudden and violent roll of the ship, impelled over the side, and launched the poor youth into the sea. "Keep an eye upon us!" exclaimed Sefton to his companions, and instantly followed, before they could have an idea of his design.

Vapourley was immediately deputed by Mr. Pring and Mr. Royston to this service, and he accordingly kept his eyes steadily fixed on our unfortunate friends astern, one of whom, though which it was impossible to distinguish, was evidently supporting the other's head above water. In the mean time, the helm was put down, the mizen-top-sail backed, and the stern boat lowered and manned; for it fortunately happened, that Captain Daventry was writing in his cabin at the time, and saw the accident. Royston, presently running up to Vapourley—"Well Mr. Vapourley," cried he, "do you see them?"

"Oh! yes," replied the man of true courage, "very plain: they are still above water, and assisting each other to swim."—"Make haste, then," continued Royston, "to the boat; they are waiting for you to put off, and will steer by your direction." This information ran like ice through Vapourley's veins! "Waiting for me, Mr. Royston?" rejoined he, turning as pale as ashes; "what good can I do in the boat?—Good God! such a heavy sea, too! It will upset with so many."—"You are a mean, pitiful, cowardly, lying braggart! exclaimed the indignant cadet, and unworthy the name of man." So saying, he rushed to the boat, but it had just put off without him. The third mate, who sat at the helm knew not exactly which way to steer, and we should have been compelled (with whatever reluctance) to have made an abrupt finale to this our history, by winding it up with some elegiac stanzas on the untimely death

of our young heros, had not a little sharp-eyed midshipman discovered poor Sefton a-head, gradually sinking with Ralph, already apparently dead, in his arms! To the incredible exertions of the sailors, who now rowed towards the spot with the strength of so many giants, and the able steerage of the Honourable Mr. D——, the boat came up just time enough to save them from the destructive deep. Sefton was soon restored to life and recollection, (for he had fainted when taken into the boat) but Reybridge, notwithstanding every exertion, remained insensible till he was received on board, where the unremitting attention and skill of the doctor at length succeeded, and Ralph was able to sit up and recognize his friends. The good captain was now preparing to speak to him, when Reybridge, suddenly recollecting the danger from which he had been rescued, started up, and gazing wildly about, asked if *all* was

safe and well?" "*All*, my dear boy," replied the captain, "therefore cheer up, and compose yourself."—"Ah, Sir," continued he, still gazing about; "do not deceive me! I see, I see, I am destined to despair! else, why do I not embrace the noble, the generous preserver of my life? Oh! Sefton, if for me thou hast fallen an untimely sacrifice, I never shall look up again!" The gallant lad at this came forward, and taking our delighted hero by the hand, "Will you," said he, "dear Ralph, *now* forget my former ill conduct? I confess it, I am ashamed of it." Reybridge essayed to answer, but he had not yet recovered sufficient strength, and could only repeatedly embrace his friend, whilst the tears, in spite of all his endeavours, flowed plentifully from his eyes.

Captain Daventry and the by-standers, even to the commonest sailor in the ship, were much affected by this interesting event; in honour of which an extra al

lowance of grog was served out, and public rejoicings made from the stem to the stern of the Phœnix. The whole crew, indeed, were no less delighted with the grateful behaviour of Ralph, than with the singular magnanimity of Sefton.

CHAP. VI.

Vapourley's disgrace, and Miss Standen's mortification.—Our hero is summoned to a very adventurous ordeal, which he very manfully undergoes.—The solemnities of Neptune and Amphitrite.—The man of valour completely exposed and punished.

WE have ever thought it a cruel thing in our lexicographers to press one (and only one) poor word of our language into the service of so many different meanings—We allude to that comprehensive adjective *brave*. I remember to have read once of a very *brave* young man, who having long possessed the reputation of great courage, suddenly turned out to be a *bravado*, and was at length assassinated in the streets of Venice by a

bravo. We have ventured to make this observation, because we would not be understood to speak ironically, when we mention the *brave* Mr. Vapourley, who, in one sense of the expression, may fairly be said to have an indisputable claim.

Of his conduct since the boat adventure, neither Reybridge nor Sefton, though well acquainted with the particulars, took notice, but rather seemed desirous that so flagrant an instance of pusillanimity might be buried in oblivion. Mr. Royston, however, did not feel equally delicate on the subject, the matter was accordingly soon made public; and such was the general disgust it occasioned, that poor Vapourley could scarcely walk the deck. The murmurs even of the common seamen pursued him, nor was there a cabin boy that did not turn up his dirty nose at him. In the cuddy it was still worse; his observations in general conversation were unattended to, and if he ventured to ask a question, it was never

replied to but with contemptuous formality, and sometimes not at all. But the severest shock to him was the loss of the lovely Miss Standen's affections. This amiable young lady had early been taught to look for happiness through the medium of rank and riches; and where these were to be obtained, could gaze as passionately at the withered sconce of decriptude, as the opening features of health, beauty, and intelligence. She had therefore experienced great disappointment on first coming on board, at not finding some infatuated old dotard, high in the service, on whose liberty and pagodas she might commence an attack. Vapourley had the promise of the golden harvest before him, she knew; but then he was only a writer, and lamentably deficient in both personal and mental charms. He had, nevertheless, been hitherto in this fair one's eyes, a fitter object of coquetry, than our free-mariner or the cadets; and as she had, from the beginning, deter-

mined to have, according to the adage, as many irons as possible in the fire, she thought his heart worth securing against a repulse from higher quarters; an event, which, notwithstanding the number and variety of her accomplishments, some intruding suggestions of conscience warned her was not altogether impossible. Our *brave* youth, therefore, had been the happy favourite on all occasions. His was the honour of drinking the first glass of wine with her at dinner, of receiving the first salutation of the morning, and walking with her up and down the quarter-deck, when the weather was fair; and as Vapourley affected the man of gallantry, these attentions, of course, had been acknowledged by him with the most zealous gratitude, at the same time that he attributed them entirely to his own merits. Cowardice in a man is unluckily a fault, which no interested motive whatever can prevail upon a woman to overlook. No sooner, therefore, had the fair Stan-

den been made acquainted with the conduct of her lover in regard to Ralph and Sefton, than she contracted her once smiling countenance into so many scornful and contemptuous distortions, and scowled at him with an expression of such decided disgust, that the discomfited swain chose to confine himself in his cabin, rather than endure such intolerable mortification. Reybridge, who sincerely pitied his situation, would have taken him by the hand, and got him restored to favour among his messmates, but the proffered interposition was gloomily rejected; so true is it, that when ignorance, vanity, and cowardice, go together, they seldom fail to make that retrograde movement of malevolence in the heart, which prejudices it the more particularly against those very persons towards whom it should feel an emotion of kindness.

Miss Standen, with little warmth of constitution, was not, however, quite insensible to the personal beauty and ex

treme affability of our hero. She accordingly, after Vapourley's dismission, condescended to direct her operations towards him; not with any design to throw herself away upon so very abject a character, but only to try upon him the force of her attractions, and to how low a degree of human misery she could reduce the unhappy youth, when she should suddenly disappoint the rapturous expectations she meant him for a time to indulge. But we are sorry to say, our hero was proof against every smile, ogle, and insinuation; and the confused and disappointed fair was surprized into a fatal discovery, that the utmost efforts of her art might not only be borne without danger, but even slighted without ceremony or remorse. With Sefton she was not more successful. He, indeed, having more levity of disposition than his friend, would sometimes laugh at her folly, and affected airs; and return with interest, her smiles and ogles; but she had the

mortification to observe, that the canker worm did not "prey on his damask cheek," and that he did not eat a morsel the less pork and peas pudding at dinner.

Disdain now succeeded; and she testified her contempt of such insensibility, by maintaining a haughty silence to every one, a change of conduct which we are obliged to observe, neither interrupted the harmony of our little circle, or the spirit of conversation. The fleet was now fast approaching the equinoctial line; and one morning Reybridge was awaked by his friend Sefton out of a sweet sleep, and told to turn out without loss of time, for that they had passed the line during the night, and that * *Nep-*

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* On passing the line, the sailors are allowed a certain quantity of liquor, and to perform a ridiculous ceremony upon all such as are not able to pay the tribute of grog which is claimed from them, if they have never crossed the line before. Neptune and Amphi-

tune and his wife would be on board in less than five minutes. "Neptune and his wife!" cried Ralph in amazement, "what the deuce do you mean?"—"Oh! oh!" replied Sefton, "what, Captain Daventry has not told you then?—But rise, make haste; his godship will be upon us else before we can take sanctuary in the cuddy, and then, Ralph, in spite of fate, we shall both of us be shaved!"—"Shaved!" replied Ralph, applying his fingers to his chin, "Gad, with all my soul! the operation will not take up much time, that's one comfort. But, prithee, dear Tom, explain this enigma.—I do not recollect that old Homer, among the many great attributes of the water deity, mentions those of a tonsor!" Sefton was about to reply, when the cabin door was forced

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trite are supposed to hail the ship and come on board. The captain and his officers pay them homage, and then the customary *fun* begins, but it would be "better honoured in the breach than the observance."

violently open by the fall of a block down the main hatchway, and discovered the steerage in the greatest confusion. A number of fantastic shapes were running to and fro, and making the most hideous grimaces. Sefton, who saw what was going forward, hurried out of the cabin, almost convulsed with laughter at our hero's stare of astonishment, as he sat upright in his cot. In a few minutes, Mr. D—— came below, and seeing Ralph's situation, asked him with a waggish smile, if he meant to lie in bed all day; at the same time acquainting him that some friends waited to receive him on deck, and welcome him under the line. Reybridge now sprung out of bed, and dressed himself with all possible expedition; rather desirous than otherwise of participating in the fun going forward, and of which he could form no probable idea.

On approaching the after-hatchway, where there is generally a ladder placed

for the purpose of ascending to the quarter-deck, Ralph was surprized to find it removed, and was obliged to go forward to the fore-hatchway, almost suffocated with smoke and stink. The steps of this ladder were so very slippery that our hero could not, without great difficulty, keep his feet; and before he had got half way up, he was suddenly overwhelmed by a deluge of water that almost deprived him of his breath. By no means delighted with this introductory ablution, he thought at first of returning to his cabin; but ashamed of his apprehensions, he at length resolved to face the enemy in full force, and proceeded firmly onward. He was received on deck with acclamations from all quarters, and presently summoned by a motley collection of *Nereides* and *Tritons*, who decorated him with pitch and paint till he was almost as rueful a figure as any of those he beheld. He was then dragged before *Neptune* and *Amphitrite*, who were seated in state in a car, made

out of an old tub, ornamented with wet swabs, and numberless curious devices in paint.

The monarch of the deep had on his head a crown made of oakum and paste-board, and held in his right hand a harpoon, which served for a trident. Indeed, but for these distinctions, it would have been utterly impossible to have known his majesty from his fair consort, for their faces were so equally begrimed with filth of every description, and their beards (particularly her majesty's) so hideously bushy, bristly, and greasy, that no one feature was discernible.

Our undaunted hero now approached this formidable pair, and was about to make his obeisance, when Amphitrite, (forgetful of the dignity so compatible with her situation, not only as a wife, but a queen and a goddess,) sprung from her seat, and catching the unfortunate youth in her arms, (from whence Hercules himself might have exerted his might in vain

to have escaped), almost strangled him in her embraces.

Neptune, highly and justly incensed at so glaring a proof of incontinence in his royal spouse, hastily descended from his car, and, with the assistance of some of his Nereides, disengaged our hero from her clutches: the hoary monarch then saluted her with two or three hearty kicks, called her a wanton good-for-nothing trull, and replaced her by main force in the car, where it is probable she would have fainted under such a load of indignity, had not a can of gin grog put all matters to rights again.

And now, "the god whose trident shakes the solid earth," ordered Reybridge to be placed in a large water-cask, and two or three tubs of water to be thrown over him. This ceremony he bore with surprizing fortitude, and might possibly have submitted to another of Amphitrite's hugs; but, when the tonsor appeared with his shaving apparatus, composed of a

rusty old knife of the joiner's, full of notches, and a pot containing the lather (which, as it was neither made of Windsor, violet, pearl, or any other celebrated soap, we do not think it necessary to describe) he begged a parley, and, with great grace and good humour, spoke as follows. "Most mighty Neptune! and you his august spouse! it is far from my wish to object to any of the established rules of this important day; but I humbly beg leave to remind your majesties, that in the article of shaving, a beard should not be wanting to do honour to the ceremony. Now, if your majesties will condescend to cast an eye upon my chin, you will observe that it is scarcely beginning to show a crop, I therefore humbly hope, a respite will be granted to me; in the mean time, I beg your majesties' acceptance of two cans of grog, to be called for whenever it may suit your gracious pleasures."

This well-timed speech was received

with unanimous bursts of applause. He was immediately liberated by Neptune himself, who having ordered him three cheers, conducted him in triumph to his cabin, where he was left unmolested, to make himself a little clean and com fortable.

Mr. Vapourley, who, from the first moment, had taken shelter in the cuddy (a place which was not to be approached by the watery deity or any of his followers), now thought of putting in practice an expedient to retrieve his character from the odium so lately cast upon it. When, therefore, Reybridge's treatment at the gangway became known, he suddenly exclaimed, "I wonder such an absurd custom as this can be allowed to be kept up by any sensible man. Mr. Reybridge may choose to put up with the insults of these low-lived fellows, but curse me if I would! I would blow the first scoundrel's brains out that dared to touch me!"—"There is no occasion,

Mr. Vapourley," replied Captain Daventry, with a smile of contempt, "for you to apprize us of what you would, or what you could do in a similar predicament, since there is very little fear, so long as you keep *snug* in the cuddy, of your being involved in one. "If you suppose, Captain Daventry," returned Vapourley, "that I should be afraid to face the danger, let me tell you, Sir, that you are very much mistaken; and I will instantly convince you that you are." So saying, the dauntless youth snatched up his hat, and, wonderful to relate, sallied manfully forth into the midst of the throng! The subjects of the Trident were so taken up with their own concerns, that they did not immediately observe this phenomenon strutting triumphantly up and down the quarter-deck. No sooner, however, was he espied, than two stout Nereides endeavoured to la hold of him. Vapourley seeing their intention, turned suddenly upon them, and

drawing a pistol from his coat pocket, cocked, and presented it at them; upon which, the two nymphs, notwithstanding they were immortal, drew back. "Hark'e, my lads;" cried he, "it may be very well for such easy gentlemen as Mr. Reybridge to put up with your tricks, but you shall not play them at my expense, and the first among you that ventures to touch me, may I be d——d if I do not lodge a brace of bullets in his guts!"—"And may I be d——d!" replied an old tar, that had been in nine engagements, "if I do not stand your fire: for I'm pretty certain, do you see, that such a cowardly cub as you have proved yourself to be, has not spirit enough to kill a louse. What is your pistol charged with, brother Ray, peas, or sugar plumbs? Come, pop away." Poor Vapourley's confusion, at this unexpected rebuff, was inconcievable. He would have given his writership to have been safe in the cuddy again; but this was out of the question.

He was accordingly surrounded, and dragged before the dread tribunal, where the whole business was explained to Neptune, who, having examined the pistol, discovered that it had not at that, or any other period, received the compliment of a charge, even of peas, or sugar plumbs, it being one of a brace purchased new from the shop of the celebrated Mr. F—g, by Mr. Vapourley himself, two days before the sailing of the fleet. Resistance and expostulation were equally vain; the hero was obliged to submit to his fate, and, amidst the hoots and hisses of the seamen, was bound to the shaving chair, where he was compelled to undergo a punishment scarcely inferior to the inquisitorial question. Notwithstanding his cries and bitter execrations during the tonsorial ceremony, the operation was completely performed; and then, before the unfortunate culprit could recover breath, he was precipitated into a tub over head and ears in water, where, pro-

bably, (so great was the indignation of the sea-gods against him) he would have been drowned, had not Ralph, who came opportunely on deck, compassionated his deplorable condition, and prevailed upon Neptune to give orders for his release. But the Nereides would not let him off till they had tied a rope round his neck, to which his pistol was suspended, with threats, that if he attempted to dis-encumber himself of this honourable badge till the next day, they would find an opportunity of handling him still more severely.

The shame of this last exposure, and the consciousness of having justly brought it upon himself, too plainly pointed out to our half-drowned adventurer the inefficacy of complaint to Captain Daventry, who, however severely he would have punished his sailors for a treatment so outrageous of any person that had not provoked it, conceived himself by no means justified in resenting the wrongs of

a braggadocia, who had not only petulantly rejected his hints and his advice, but had thrown off his protection altogether, and dared his men to attack him, by an expedient so weak, so cowardly, and so contemptible.

Obliged, therefore, to yield to his disgrace, he now confined himself almost wholly to his cabin, where we shall for for the present leave him to breathe his sorrows to the winds and the waves.

CHAP. VII.

A gale of wind and a separation.—The debt of magnanimity discharged.—Neptune makes his second appearance; but the tables are turned, and the mortal protects the God.—The Phœnix arrives in Madras Roads.

Reybridge, whose thirst for information would not permit him to remain idle, soon made himself master of some of the most useful branches of trade and navigation. He could work the lunar observations with great accuracy, steer the ship, box the compass, and explain the names and properties of almost every rope in the ship. Sefton was not so studiously inclined, but this made little difference in the degree of estimation in which he was now held by his grateful friend; and, in-

deed, the cadet returned with interest his protestations of inviolable attachment.

The fleet had now doubled the Cape, and Captain Daventry began to hope it would escape a gale of wind, as the Commodore had signified his intention of going the inward passage, and stopping at Johanna for a supply of water. The wind, however, continuing unfavourable to this arrangement, it was at length resolved, according to the united opinion of all the commanders, to keep on the outward passage, and Captain Daventry, in consequence, began to prepare for blowing weather. "For," said he, "if we get past Madagascar without a cap of wind, at least, it will be for the first time in my life." The worthy captain was right in his conjectures; in a week's time, notwithstanding they were nearly a thousand miles from the land, the wind continued to increase till the oldest sailor in the ship was obliged to confess it blew a spanking breeze.

The Phœnix, admirably manned and commanded, weathered the gale without receiving any material damage. The main and fore top-masts were sprung during a heavy squall; some old sails split to pieces, and part of the running rigging had suffered: but the ship remained tight in other respects, and did not make above ten inches water in her hold during the roughest periods of the gale. On the morning of the third day, she lost sight of the fleet. One ship was observed apparently in distress, from the larboard bow, but she was at too great a distance for Captain Daventry to ascertain this circumstance, and indeed she did not remain long in sight. On the evening of the fourth day, our hero, who had, for the first time, suffered violently from sea-sickness, ventured to leave his cot, to which, ever since the commencement of the gale, he had been confined. On opening his cabin door, the smoke and effluvia from the steerage, owing to the

necessity of keeping the ports down, almost suffocated him, whilst chests, cots, trunks, and wrecks of various sorts, were floating about in the most lamentable disorder. At the hazard of his legs, and even his neck, he however ventured forth, for he could no longer endure the dreadful confinement below. The gale had abated considerably, but the sea still ran high, and the ship laboured very much. As he was about to ascend the ladder, he was surprised to see his friend, the Honourable Mr. D——, the son of one of the most ancient earls in the kingdom, sitting on a tar bucket, and very comfortably regaling himself with a biscuit and a slice of salt beef; probably at the same moment that his gracious lord and father was entertaining a set of sycophants attached to his interest, at a table loaded with every species of luxury.

Ralph, having with some difficulty got upon deck, the first words he heard were, "Then, Sir, you must allow me to tell you

that you are a liar, and a scoundrel!"—Our hero immediately recognized the voice of Sefton, and beheld, at the same instant, a drawn sword in the hand of Royston, who was evidently intoxicated, directed at his breast!—Reybridge rushing forward, like lightning, caught the blow, which might otherwise have proved fatal to his friend on the fleshy part of his right arm. This was all done before the officer on deck could interfere; the parties were, however, instantly separated, and, whilst our hero was handed over to the care of the surgeon, Captain Daventry came upon deck, and with some sternness in his countenance, desired to be informed of the reason of so indecent an outrage! Royston was incapable of explaining. Sefton, who was more himself, answered, that nothing but the most serious provocation could have driven him at such a moment to extremities. That Mr. Royston had thought proper to speak in the grossest terms of a relation that was very dear to him, casting

upon his character, imputations equally scandalous and unfounded, and which, when called upon, he had refused to support by any authority whatever. "I think, Captain Daventry," continued the youth, "I once heard you mention my uncle, Captain Penrose, with respect: I have ever been taught to look up to him as the *honour* of his family; I am about to consign myself to his protection, and fight possibly under his command: how then could I bear to hear him so vilely calumniated, without testifying my indignation?" Captain Daventry, upon this, turned towards Royston, but he was still unable to speak coherently; the further investigation of the business was, therefore, deferred till the following morning, and the captain returned to the round-house; not, however, before he had severely reprimanded the officer on deck for having suffered a conversation of so serious a nature to be carried on without acquainting him. Sefton, whose anxiety

for his wounded friend overwhelmed every other consideration, now flew to his cabin. The surgeon, whom he met at the door, told him the wound was trifling, and would heal in a few days; but, that it was very necessary his patient should be kept quiet. The cadet promised he would not stay long, and then entering the cabin, was presently in Ralph's arms.—"My dear fellow!" said he, "we are now quits, and though, Heaven knows the world would have suffered no loss if the fellow had pinked me, yet I should have died very reluctantly in the consciousness of falling so disgracefully."—"Indeed, my dear Tom," replied Reybridge, "I can never be sufficiently thankful to Providence for sending me to your defence. The sense of my obligation to you I shall now be able to bear: before it oppressed me."—"Pho," rejoined Sefton, "you give me more credit on that occasion than I deserve. I am a capital swimmer; and knew (assisted by the

usual exertions of a ship's crew) I could save you. It was that coward Vapourley that was the cause of the delay, and consequently the danger." Ralph now feeling inclined to sleep, his friend withdrew to the cuddy to supper, at which meal the worthy Captain Daventry presided as usual, but, for the first time, with the clouds of mortification on his brow.

By the following morning the gale had settled into a pleasant breeze, and, in a few hours, a new main-top mast was got up and the fore-top-mast reefed. This business being happily effected without any accident, Captain Daventry summoned Mr. Royston to the round-house, and after a conversation of some length, Sefton was requested to make his appearance. Mr. Pring, the other cadet, who was the messenger on this occasion, found his brother of the cockade disputing with our hero on the subject of calling Royston to a further account; he, however, instantly obeyed the captain's summons, and the first ob-

ject he saw, on entering his cabin, was the defamer himself, who, immediately approaching, spoke in the following manner: "Mr. Sefton, Captain Daventry has convinced me that there is but one honourable way of atoning for a fault, which is, by acknowledging it. I ask your pardon for what I asserted last night to the prejudice of your uncle's character, and which nothing but inebriety, and being ignorant of your connexion with Captain Penrose, could have occasioned. Captain Daventry has fully convinced me that I must have been deceived by those aspersions of malevolence which are daily disseminated through coffee-houses and newspapers; the only channels, I confess, to my shame, through which I acquired my information." Sefton, though feeling somewhat of contempt for a man who could suffer himself to be led away by the scurrility of a newspaper, and the viler misrepresentations of coffee-house retailers, received Mr. Royston's acknowledgment as be-

came him, and taking his hand,—"I very joyfully accept your apology, Sir," said he, "and, on my part, retract the opprobrious appellations my passion hurried me to cast upon you. I am sorry that any misunderstanding should have arisen to disturb our former good fellowship; which, however, I hope, will now be more steadily renewed." The young men, thus reconciled, testified the warmest gratitude to the captain, by whose kind and considerate interference a fatal duel had probably been prevented; and Ralph was so elated at the intelligence of their reconciliation, that, in a few days, he arose perfectly cured of his wound. Nothing very material occurred now for several weeks. The ship had a second time crossed the line, and was only within a few days sail of Madras, when, one morning, as Reybridge was reading in his cabin, his curiosity was raised by the boatswain's whistle piping the hands up; this being rather an unusual summons, he instantly went

upon deck, and was given to understand, that his old friend *Neptune* was about to be flogged at the gangway for having made use of disrespectful language to the chief mate; a punishment from which Ralph was well aware neither his trident, his nereides, nor even the intercession of the fair Amphitrite herself, could redeem him. His generous heart, in an instant, glowed with compassion for the hoary monarch; the more especially as his godship was universally acknowledged to be a good-hearted fellow, and an excellent seaman. Determining, therefore, to procure for him, if possible, a pardon, he waited till the offender had began to strip, and the boatswain was preparing his tremendous cat, and then sprang forward like Mercury sent with a reprieve from Jove, and kneeling at the feet of Captain Daventry, whose hand he affectionately grasped, he pleaded for the old seaman in the most pathetic terms. The novelty of the application, and the fervency with which it was made,

combining with the interesting posture and appearance of the youthful mediator, proved irresistible, and the captain, turning to the chief officer,—"Well, Mr. Farrington," said he, "what say you? are you disposed to allow any weight to the intercession of this young gentleman?" "Most assuredly, Sir," replied Mr. Farrington; "and I return you thanks for giving me a vote on so worthy an occasion." Upon this Neptune was released, and having bowed, and returned thanks to his captain and chief mate, he approached our hero, and dropping on one knee, and grasping his hand, "God bless thee!" exclaimed he, "my worthy young gentleman! Art a landsman for ought that I do know, but I'll be d——d if be'est a lubber; and as long as Joe Grappling can carry his hull above water he'll not forget thee, my sweet lad!" So saying, the old tar, dashing a tear from his eye, jumped forward, and was out of sight in a moment.

A few days after this event, the Phœnix arrived in the Madras roads. About seven o'clock in the morning she came to an anchor, and saluted Fort St. George, the compliment was returned, and soon after several Massoola* boats and catamarans† put off from the shore, and came alongside.

At sight of so many natives, almost in a state of pure nature, Miss Standen, who

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* These boats are made of very slight materials, but they are large, well put together, and very dexterously managed by the natives. It is dangerous, if not impracticable, to get over the high surf that breaks along the coast of Coromandel in any other kind of boat.

† The catamaran is composed of two planks of wood tied together, over which a single native paddles with one oar, and gets through the water, and even over the surf, on them, with surprising celerity. They are sometimes carried off by a wave, but they are excellent swimmers, and quickly regain their seat. Their usual occupation is to bear letters to and from the ships in the roads, and they frequently attend boats when the surf is high, to be useful in case of an accident.

had come upon deck with her aunt to see the fort, and other surrounding objects, uttered a shriek much shriller than the boatswain's whistle in a gale of wind, protesting, with her fan before her eyes, that she must positively remain in her cabin till the ship returned to England, for that it was impossible she could suffer herself to be rowed on shore by naked men! after which assertion she hastened, with all speed, to the stern gallery, where she had a fuller and much better view of every thing that was going forward.

Several gentlemen of the settlement, and *dubashes** now came on board, from whom Captain Daventry had the satisfaction of learning, that European articles were very much wanted, and that he might dispose

* A Dubash is a native who either acts as a domestic servant, or, in a higher degree, manages the detail of an official station. Thus they are called *head*, or second Dubashes, according to their particular employment.

of his investment to the greatest advantage, as the Phœnix was the first ship of the fleet that had arrived.

Our hero and Sefton, together with most of the other passengers, accompanied the captain on shore soon after; Vapourley, the *brave*, chose to remain as an escort to the ladies; but the truth was, he had heard that an *accommodation** boat was coming off for them, in which he had an idea he should get *safer* through the surf.

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* This boat only differs from the others as having seats, and an awning: but these are incumbrances which rather increase the danger than serve as a security, when the surf is very high.

CHAP. VIII.

Which treats of many sundry and important matters, and during which the hero of this history gets a little acquainted with the ways of the world.

WE shall pass over the various inconveniences that attended our two friends before they could finally settle themselves at Madras: Reybridge, at length, proposed that they should take a house in the Black Town, having first delivered in their credentials to the governor, and such letters of credit as they should have an opportunity of presenting. The agents, on whom our hero had bills, received him with great civility, assuring him that they would let no opportunity slip of forwarding his mercantile views, and recommending such employments of his little property as might

ultimately prove successful: in the mean time begging him to consider their house and table as his own. Reybridge was highly gratified by this very kind and unexpected reception. He had entertained some apprehensions, during his voyage, that his bills might be protested, but at no time had he flattered himself that they would be honoured with every additional demonstration of respect and attention. Again his heart smote him for having ever entertained suspicions injurious to his benefactors, the Valpines, nor could he account for his friend Fitzallen's fears on this subject. Sefton had, on his landing, written to his uncle, now Major Penrose, who was stationed to the northward of Madras; but he could learn very little of his circumstances or situation, as the major had not visited the presidency for many years. To this letter no answer was received, and it was supposed that the battalion to which he was posted, had been suddenly ordered to another station.

Ralph, in the mean time, received an invitation to dine with the governor. On so important an occasion he set himself off to the best advantage, nothing doubting but this great personage meant to inquire into his mercantile views, and possibly assist him with his advice. But great was his disappointment, on his arrival at the government house, to find himself surrounded by people of every description, to the number of fifty or sixty! He looked round for the governor to make his bow, but he might as well have looked round for the king of Bohemia; for poor Ralph was not aware that, on these public occasions, it is deemed sufficient if the invitation be sent *in the name* of that great man, who is never expected to make his appearance till dinner is announced, and then without knowing, or ever having before seen, three-fourths of the company! He sat down to a splendid dinner, however, with the rest, drank his claret in silent admiration, and, after two or three rounds

of the bottle, was, at a signal given by the chief aid-de-camp, carried away with the rest, like one of the dishes at the table that every body had looked at, but wanted curiosity to taste. And (to similarize a little longer) like Pluto returning to the Stygian regions after attending the synod of Jove on Mount Ida, did Ralph pursue his descent to his hole in the Black Town. He found Sefton in conversation with an officer of some standing in the service, and an old acquaintance of our cadet's uncle, who had called to tell him of his appointment, that day, to a battalion about to join a large detachment under marching orders, to quell some refractory *Poligars** to the northward. "So you see, my friend," observed he, "that honours and distinctions are likely to fall thick upon

* Poligars are petty princes: formerly they were tributary to the Nabob of the Carnatic, but since the assumption of that prince's revenues by the company, they have become dependants on the English.

me, if I do not get *piked** by these gentry. It was my wish, certainly, to have known a little more of my profession before I had been engaged on actual service, but, as the song says,

"'Tis but in vain for soldiers to complain!"

And for that matter, if a man be to be killed at least either at work in the trenches or mounting a breach, it is not of much consequence whether he fall an ensign or a major-general."—"And when do you march?" returned our hero, rather distressed by this abrupt intimation. "Alas! my dear Tom, your's is, I fear, a service of greater danger and inconvenience than you are aware of. You, Sir, (addressing himself to the officer) have seen a great deal of the kind, I presume?"—"Why, pretty well, Sir," replied the officer. "I

* Pikes are the usual weapons of these people, who manage them with great skill, and generally wound fatally with them.

came out a cadet fifteen years ago, and have seen some service. Perhaps I ought to consider myself as a fortunate man in having escaped with only a slight wound in my thigh during that period, and a *Jungle fever;** which, by the bye, was the greater misfortune of the two, for I have not been able to get it out of my blood to this day. I have, notwithstanding, kept up my spirits pretty well, for, in truth, a man should have a good flow of them at times, or he would never do for this country."—"But, I suppose, Sir," replied Ralph, "you have been able to put by something handsome from your pay in all this time, and may reasonably look forward to a return to your native

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* A Jungle is a wild sandy wood; and in mountainous countries much infested by tigers. The fevers caught among these hills and jungles are very destructive to the constitution, and frequently prove fatal; they are of the intermittent kind, and so infect the blood, that change of air and climate is absolutely necessary to their entire extirpation.

country very shortly?" At this question the officer smiled: "I presume, Sir," replied he, "that you have imbibed the general notion, so prevalent in England, that the very atmosphere of the East Indies is impregnated with *gold dust!* It is an error, Sir, which I am sorry to observe nothing but experience seems likely, at any time, to rectify. Even in the civil line, a company's servant, unsupported by interest and patronage, must toil up hill several years before he can lay the foundation of his fortune; but, to a soldier in a similar predicament, the goal of wealth is even at a greater distance than it is in England. Not that encouragement is not given to such as qualify themselves by studying the native languages, for political situations; and, indeed, a disposition to nobler pursuits of any kind than the bottle and the dice-box is not unfrequently regarded and rewarded by government. But how seldom is it that a young soldier conceives any mental application neces-

sary? How widely does he mistake the nature of his profession when he imagines that mere personal valour, and a steady attention to military discipline, are all the qualifications requisite!—The character of a brave man will, indeed, contribute to his exaltation to a certain degree, but courage alone will never recommend him to the command of an army:—and it is but fair to suppose, that every young soldier looks forward, with laudable ambition, to this eminent distinction. To plan a line of march, or the order of attack or retreat; to comprehend and counteract the devices of the enemy; to observe all the advantages that may be taken of his different movements and positions; and, in treaties of negotiation, where the interest and honour of nations are concerned, to decide with promptness and judgment; these are the indispensable requisites of the General of a great army, and these are not to be obtained but by the unremitting exertions of a vigorous and capacious

mind, well stored with political and scientific knowledge. In a General, prudence is, at least, as necessary a qualification as courage; and a well-covered retreat is frequently productive of more splendid consequences, and redounds infinitely more to the honour and advantage of his army than a rout of blood and slaughter! I am sorry to say that few of our present cadets seem anxious to push *themselves* forward, and without interest, or connexion, they cannot expect to be promoted to posts of emolument by *others*. As to saving from the pay we receive, it is a thing impossible; I, who have made economy my principal care, so far from having been able to put by any thing, am, at this moment, in debt, and shall have probably grown grey in the service before I have realized a decent competency: for, alas! Sir, I have no interest, and though I can speak the Hindostanee language so as to be understood in asking or answering common questions, I am by no means a proficient, my ap-

plication having been constantly retarded by ill-health."—"A discouraging picture you have drawn, indeed, Sir," rejoined our hero, with a sigh, and looking anxiously at Sefton; "but I always understood that an officer's pay in the company's service was more than in his majesty's at home." "Why that is true," replied the stranger, "but it must be also recollected, that his expenses are proportionably greater. In England an officer has no necessity for a conveyance; in India it is indispensable. To keep one servant at home is, among subalterns, considered as a luxury. Here four or five are absolutely required!" "In short, then, Sir," interrupted Sefton, who had been whistling a tune during the whole conversation, "you would advise me not to harass my mind much about ideal riches, and to eat, drink, and be merry while I can, hey?"—"Why, faith, Mr. Sefton," replied the officer, "it is not, perhaps, the worst advice I could give you; but I do not apprehend your

case to be so desperate. Major Penrose, I believe, has some little influence *at court*; but even if he had not, the advantages a young man is sure to reap, if it be not his own fault, from having so near a relation on the same establishment with himself, and so high up in the army, are too obvious to mention. But, after all, a great deal must depend upon your own exertions."

"Egad you are right, my friend," exclaimed Sefton, who had by this time well fortified his spirits by a bowl of cold punch that was upon the table; "right as my nail, and so—but, hallo! Ralph, what the devil's the matter with you? why you look as gloomy as a November fog, though you have a thousand pounds in your pocket, are out of the reach of a pike, or a musket ball, and dependent upon nobody!"

"Still, my friend," replied our hero, "you must do me the justice to believe I feel anxious on your account; nor am I at all satisfied at the propriety of pushing a young man, inexperienced as you are,

so immediately into services of danger. I think it is discouraging to him, and makes his life appear of little consequence, indeed."—"Discouraging!" replied Sefton, "pho! not at all;—so drink a glass of grog old sober-sides!—doubt not but I shall fare as well as my neighbours;—if so, I care not. Here I am, and here I must remain; and though I may not be able to make myself rich, hang me if I make myself miserable!" The officer now took his leave, and Reybridge, having recounted the particulars of his reception at the governor's, at which the other laughed heartily, both retired to bed. The reader may recollect that among the letters of recommendation presented to our hero by Mr. Horton, was one from a director of the East India Company to Mr. Macglib, second in council; an epistle he had been particularly cautioned to be careful of, as it was written in very pointed terms, and there could be very little doubt of such a recommendation being of the most essential

service to him. Ralph had, in consequence, wrapped it up in half a dozen covers, and one of his principal delights on board had been to release it, occasionally, from those incumbrances, that he might feast his eyes on his treasure. It happened, however, that Mr. Macglib was, at the time of our hero's landing, employed in a certain great political negotiation up the country, his return from which was very uncertain. Reybridge had, in consequence, been very much disappointed; but, agreeably to the advice of his agents, deferred coming to any resolution regarding his future plans till this great friend should have been consulted.

In the mean time he and Sefton, agreeably to the introductory letters, became acquainted with several of the most respectable families in the settlement, and were invited frequently to dine at their *garden houses.** On these occasions they had an

* The fort of Madras is now solely appropriated to

opportunity of observing a great deal of genuine hospitality spoiled by a great deal of ostentatious parade, and that spirit and freedom of conversation which should be the characteristic of an Englishman's table, cramped, and at some places totally suppressed, by the mysterious importance which is conceived to be the necessary symbol of the man of business and consequence. At the breakfast tables of the ladies, if the merit of a new novel, or a new farce, fell not under discussion, scandal was the never-failing resource; yet it was a scandal springing more from the levity than the malice of the disposition. Our hero, who was most attentive to subjects of trade and politics, never passed a

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business: the dwelling-houses of almost every family are detached buildings, situated at a pleasant distance from each other, two, three, and four miles therefrom. The government-house is a most splendid fabric. The Pantheon is also a fine building: it serves as an assembly-room; and, at the back, a very elegant little theatre was erected in the year 1794.

day without calling at his agent's in the fort, that he might observe how mercantile business was conducted, and collect such information from what was going forward as might qualify him to begin the world not entirely ignorant of its customs. He was extremely gratified by the liberal and public spirit of the Madras merchants, at the same time that it was with pain he heard them frequently anticipate the decline and fall of their influence and wealth. That commerce was sinking under the aggrandizement of power, and the extent of territory; and that the military establishment, in consequence, was swallowing up the resources from which it was before supported. That the company were outrunning their strength by acquiring possessions they had not the means of defending, and that the vast fabric might, sooner or later, fall to the ground like a tree whose branches were too weighty for the trunk.

The day now arrived on which our two juvenile friends were to separate. Rey-

bridge, whose love for Sefton might have been compared with David's for Jonathan, was unspeakably affected at the idea of parting with him, perhaps for ever; nor could our young soldier, maugre the sword and gorget with which he was now invested, refrain from tears! He embraced our hero affectionately. "Adieu!" said he, "dear Reybridge!—Dear Ralph, farewell! and may you be but half as successful as you deserve, and you will be rich indeed, my brave and amiable friend! For myself, I feel a soldier's hope; my spirits are light, my resolution firm:—then why should I doubt of ultimate happiness? When this piking affair is over I will write to you, my dear boy. By that time, too, I shall doubtless have heard from my uncle." Reybridge returned his embrace in silence, and the other immediately after, mounting his horse, galloped off to join his brother officers.

Our hero would have felt the loss of his friend still more severely, but for the

timely arrival of Counsellor Macglib, which was fortunately announced on the following morning by a salute of eleven guns! He instantly set off in his palanquin to his friend Mr. Brummel, one of the partners of the house into whose hands he had consigned his property, but was advised by no means to disturb the great man for a week, at least, after a journey so fatiguing in all its consequences. Our impatient youth was not, however, able to wait longer than three days, at the expiration of which period he dressed himself out to the best advantage, and releasing his letter, for the last time, from its sanctuary, proceeded with it on the morning of the fourth day to Mr. Macglib's garden house.

Unlike the houses of English great men, there appeared no surly porter at the door with a face like a barometer, to tell whether it would be rain or sunshine within; on the contrary, a set of obsequious

*peons** and dubashes were standing ready to usher the happy suitor to the presence of his patron; and, in a few minutes, he had the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Macglib; to whom, with trembling hand, he presented the letter that was to pave his way to wealth and fame. The counsellor received it with a bow of great condescension, and a smile, on observing the direction, that could only be the transporting harbinger of success. Having broken the seal, and eyed the contents askance, the smile was again renewed, and the letter carefully secured in the great man's pocket. After a pause of a few moments he began: —"Ha! hem! humph!—well, Mr. —— R.——what, you came in the——in the ——"—" In the Phœnix, Sir," murmured the trembling Ralph. " In the Phœnix,

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* A peon is a menial servant generally distinguished by a badge. His business is chiefly confined to carrying messages, and waiting at table.

hey!" replied the counsellor. "Captain Daventry, hey?—a very genteel man;—a very good man indeed that Captain Daventry. You had a pleasant passage out, I hope, Mr., a—a—"—"Yes, Sir," rejoined Ralph, "very pleasant."—"Will you dine with me to-day, Sir, if not otherwise engaged?" rejoined the great man. "I will do myself the honour, Sir," replied our hero, scarcely knowing what he said. A very long pause now succeeded, from the horrors of which poor Ralph was relieved by the appearance of another visitor, and immediately making his bow, "Good morning to you, Mr. ——," smilingly echoed the counsellor; "here, boy, call Mr. Reybridge's palanquin!"

Notwithstanding our poor hero's inexperience, he was not made of such simple materials as to entertain very sanguine hopes, after what had passed, that any better consequence would result from his introductory letter than the good dinner he was invited to sit down to; he deter-

mined, however, to let no opportunity escape of recommending himself, and of duly attending his patron's levees.

Reybridge's talents, his figure, and singular elegance of manners, gained him a civil, and sometimes kind, reception among many families of the settlement to whom he had *not* been particularly recommended; a circumstance that, if he had had much vanity, would have highly flattered it, as the progress of mere merit is as slow in India as in every other part of the globe, unattended by either rank, riches, or connexion. Mr. Macgilb, it is true, received him at all times with the greatest courtesy; but as this great friend held out very little encouragement to him to speak of his prospects and future expectations, he determined to set his own shoulder to the wheel, and an opportunity soon offered of striking a great blow. He had been taught at Madras to believe, that speculation was the very life and soul of trade, and that industry and integrity were alone insuffi-

cient to ensure success: a very eroneous and fatal principle to set out upon, and one which has been the cause of more losses and bankruptcies than any other that can be named. Unfortunately for our hero, he had not entirely forgotten the false impressions of pleasure he had received from gambling away his money at Shrewsbury, and therefore never waited to examine the dark, as well as the fair, side of the prospect now presented to his view.

He had taken his money from his agent's hands for the purpose of purchasing with a part of it, Company's paper, which was then circulating at the interest of ten per cent. In the mean time, and in an evil hour, he became acquainted with a Captain Bayburn, the owner and commander of a country ship. With the plausible and insinuating manners of this gentleman he grew so enamoured, that he thought he had found in him a second Fitzallen, and one day related to him the particulars of his story,

and what were his present intentions with regard to his little fortune.—Bayburn heard him to an end, then seizing his hand; "My dear friend," said he, "Providence has surely brought us together, that we may each be the means of making the other's fortune. You cannot surely be ignorant, that in the southern districts, there is such a scarcity of rice, that the most serious apprehensions are entertained of a famine!" "I have, my dear Sir," replied Ralph, "heard of this circumstance; what then?"—"The rest is as simple, as that the event will prove successful;" replied Bayburn, "you shall join your fortune to mine, which will enable me to freight my ship with rice, and dispose of my cargo up the country to the best possible advantage; and as my vessel is at present clear, I can fit her for sea sooner than any one in the roads. In short, my dear young friend, our profits will be immense

if we can be before-hand with other ships that are preparing for a similar expedition; and, of that, I have very little doubt, for the Anna sails like the wind." Though Ralph was delighted with the idea of so soon acquiring a decent competence, and with which he was resolved to be satisfied, he felt embarrassed by the abruptness of his friend's proposal; and the idea of imposing implicit confidence in a man who was almost a stranger to him, somewhat staggered him. Unluckily his agent, Mr. Brammel, the only partner of the firm, with whom he was well acquainted, was at this time on a visit to a friend at the **Mount*, or he would have consulted him immediately

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* St. Thomas's Mount is situated about ten miles to the southward of Madras: the body of the Saint is supposed to be buried under it, and there is a Roman Catholic church at the top. It is an artillery cantonment, about a mile from which is the race-course, where the Madras races are held annually.

on the subject. Whilst he stood considering what was best to be done, for he did not like to show the least want of confidence in his brother merchant, the other, who could read hearts and countenances as well as most people, dispelled every doubt in our hero's mind, by observing, "that it was unfortunate *Mr. Brummel*, whom he should have wished to have consulted on this business, was out of the fort, but that *his own* agent, Mr. Zaccary, whose office was in the Black Town, would have the regular *agreement* drawn up between them which should be lodged in his hands, and that he would, besides, give any *further security* that might be thought necessary." To poor Reybridge, who was as ignorant as an infant of legal securities, and the proper and satisfactory forms which rendered them binding, all this seemed so equitable, that he closed instantly with the first proposal, and that no time might be lost, they repaired to Mr. Zaccary's

office, and in the presence of that gentleman, and two creditable witnesses, concluded the bargain. The proper covenants were signed, and the money deposited in due form. In a short time the rice was bought up, and as Captain Bayburn had predicted, before any other vessel in the roads, away sailed the good ship Anna.

So much had this arrangement, while pending, occupied Ralph's mind, that he could think of nothing else; and so continually was he with his friend Bayburn, that few opportunities occurred of his mentioning the subject of his speculation to those friends, whose advice might have been of service to him: not that his plans were unknown to them; but they concluded, (as most every day friends do) that as their opinion was not worth soliciting, it was not worth volunteering.

A few days, however, after the departure of his worthy colleague, our young schemer ventured to acquaint Mr. Macglib of what he had done.—"Ha! humph!

well!" replied the great man, "this *may* do, certainly: but let me see; Bayburn, Bayburn! why surely this cannot be the Bayburn that belonged to the house of Ragstaff and Co. Calcutta, and which failed last year for a large sum of money! And yet, on second thoughts, it must, too. Pray Mr. Reybridge, who *recommended* this person to you?" It is impossible to describe poor Ralph's consternation, when the rashness and imprudence of his own conduct was thus brought at once to his view. "I confess, Sir," replied he with tremulous hesitation, "that Captain Bayburn was never *particularly* introduced to me; but as I had met him, several times in the most *respectable company*, and heard him spoken of as a *pleasant well-informed* man, I thought I might safely confide."—"Ah! well;" interrupted the counsellor, "that was very liberal conduct on your part, certainly; and I wish you all manner of success—but, that is—

in short, my dear Mr. Reybridge, you are yet, I find, but a *young* merchant."

From this great friend the counsellor, poor Ralph pursued his inquiries downwards, till he came to free merchants like himself; but the Calcutta failure was in every body's mouth, and though every body did Jack Bayburn the justice to say he was the finest, jolliest, wittiest dog unde the sun, the best bred, and most *gentlemanly* man in the settlement, and had once borne his Majesty's commission in the Life-Guards, yet there was not, unfortunately, a single person that could vouch for his having a single grain of honesty in his composition.

Mr. Brummel, the gentleman who had advised Ralph to purchase, with a part of his property, Company's paper, confirmed, upon application, the worst that could be said of Bayburn.

That he was a man of no integrity whatever, and that his Black Town agent was little better: in short, that though

he might, on the present occasion, return to fulfil the engagements entered into, it was no less probable he would shape a very different course, and therefore advised our hero to prepare for the blow. Poor Reybridge, who, all honour himself, had no idea that such abominable treachery could exist in the human heart, was inconceivably shocked by this declaration, yet still ventured to indulge a hope that the gay, the cheerful, the amiable Bayburn could not possibly *be* this treacherous wretch! he was now, however, to see a little of mankind, and to learn that friendship is as much the cant phrase of knaves and hypocrites, as it is the sacred term that links congenial hearts by the ties of worth and honour.

CHAP. IX.

Our hero hears from his friend Sefton, and renews his visits in the settlement in consequence. He falls in with his old messmate, Vapourley, whom he leaves at the very pinnacle of bravery.

REYBRIDGE was so shocked at his own imprudence, that his reflections, in consequence, began to prey both upon his health and his spirits. For a fortnight he confined himself to his miserable lodging in the Black Town, and we know not to how low a degree of despondency he might have reduced himself, had he not been unexpectedly revived by a letter from his dear friend, Sefton, the contents of which were as follows.

"My dear Ralph,

"You have frequently lamented that my worthy parents did not place me calmly and quietly behind the counter to serve out yards of ribband, and cards of lace to my lady's maid, instead of making a soldier and a gentleman of me. Industry and integrity you have, on these occasions, maintained, are oftener productive of permanent happiness, than the greatest honours and distinctions; and that *false* pride is frequently the forerunner of misery and misfortune. But suppose I should now say in answer, that my dear dad and mam have, in regard to me, been actuated by *true* pride; for, though I allow all possible praise to honest Mr. Strap the shoe-maker, and industrious Mr. Thimble the tailor, yet I cannot see why these worthy personages should, because they can respectively make a good coat, or a good shoe, be entitled to more permanent happiness than

their superiors! And so, my young philosopher, listen to what the kind goddess Fortune has already done for me, and then tell me whether I am likely to become the prey of 'misery and misfortune!'

"Our battalion joined Colonel Manningham's detachment on the 8th, at a place called Nourapett; and after five day's march, we fell in with some parties of the enemy, with whom we had some smart skirmishes. Yesterday we halted at a small village about ten miles distance from the fort we are to attack, and were there joined by four companies of the 7th regiment, commanded by Major Penrose. Think, my dear fellow, what was my joy and surprize! I had given up all thoughts of hearing from my uncle for some time at least; much less had I formed an idea of falling in with him at such a time, and on such a service! The major received and acknowledged me with an affection truly parental. My father had written to apprize him of my coming

out, but the letter had never reached him; I was obliged, therefore, to introduce myself, and the major having contemplated my features a little, 'What Tommy,' cried he, 'my little playfellow! Is it indeed, my little Tom Sefton?' He then embraced me with great emotion. 'I am truly rejoiced,' continued my honoured uncle, 'that my good friend, your father, has thought proper to respect the name of Penrose, and not allow it to lie within the folds of doe-skin gloves and cotton stockings. I am indeed so well satisfied with his behaviour, that I shall from this moment take the sole charge of you, and it will be your own fault, Tom, if you do not make a tolerable fortune in a few years.' Oh! Ralph, the advantages resulting from this fortunate event are incalculable! The major, whose services and abilities have justly secured to him the approbation and confidence of government, seems determined to push me on to immediate promotion, in the

mean time, he has charged me to study the Persian and Marhatta languages, and has told me that when I am able to write and read either of them with tolerable fluency, it will be in his power to recommend me without fear of repulse, to a situation of great trust and emolument in the political line. He has moreover generously given me a sum of money to defray my present expenses, and means shortly to follow up this beneficent supply by a letter of credit on his agent at Madras for a thousand pagodas more, which he says, will enable me to steer clear of debt, till I have qualified myself for the above mentioned situation. I think, dear Reybridge, that with all my whims and irregularities you have a good opinion of my heart, and not a mean one of my understanding, and that you will credit me when I assure you that application shall not be wanting on my part, to requite, in some measure, these acts of benevolence.

"I have not heard how *you* get on with your great friend at Madras, or whether you have yet engaged in any line of business, but if I and my dear uncle *Pen* can be of the least assistance in any way, fail not to let us know by return of *Tapparel.** I have already introduced your *mind* to him, with which he is so well pleased, that he is very anxious to view your person. I related to him some of our adventures on board the Phœnix, and they greatly delighted and *affected* him; for I did not suppress *certain particulars.* And now I will tell you what he said of you. It is a thousand pities Tom, that such a gallant lad had not been sent out with a musket on his shoulder, instead of a quill behind his ear. I am sure, my friend, you will admire my uncle. He is generous without

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* This is the cant term for the post. In Bengal it is called the Dawk.

being profuse, for his establishment is economical; he is brave without being rashly impetuous, and though a strict observer of discipline in his corps, yet his officers, one and all, respect and love him; a proof that he suffers not his rank and duty as their commander, to interfere with the social intercourse between man and man. The major is about fifty-four, a little injured by the climate, but with hopes still, he says, to see me crowned with laurels and riches! Indeed Ralph, when I think of this sudden change in my prospects, I can hardly believe that it is real! In short, if I go on much longer, my egotism will be intolerable even to you, so I shall hasten to a conclusion, in good time, too, for my uncle has just summoned me to ride out with him and so, dear Ralph, adieu.—'Io, Io, triumphe!' sings

"Your happy and affectionate friend,

THOMAS SEFTON."

Ramapatam,
September 5th, 17—.

Though there were passages in this exulting epistle, which did not altogether meet with our hero's full approbation, yet he was so gratified by the general tenor of it, that it banished for a time the gloom of his own thoughts, and he resolved to accept of an invitation that had been sent him to dinner, and which he had almost determined before to refuse. He therefore, at the proper hour, ordered his palanquin, and repaired to the gentleman's house, where he found a very large party assembled. As he arrived just as the company were sitting down to the table, he took his station at one corner of it, where he could be the least noticed; for though his spirits had been considerably raised by the communication he had received, he was by no means fit company for the circulators of the bottle.

Little passed during dinner, but when the cloth was removed, the news of the day began to be generally discussed, and Ralph was at once surprized and pleased

to hear his friend Sefton's good fortune the theme of conversation. In this he was himself on the point of joining, when he was checked by a shrill voice, to which every individual of the company seemed to pay the profoundest attention, exclaiming "I know this lad, Sefton; he was a shipmate of mine. His father was a hosier, or a tallow chandler, or some such trade. A good sort of a youth enough, but rather of the *wishy-washy* breed; not much calculated, in my mind, for a soldier. To say the truth, though I say it, he owes his life to me; for he tumbled overboard during the voyage, and I was the only person that never lost sight of him in the water, and directed the boat to the spot where he was struggling with the waves, though the sea was running rather *aukwardly* high at the time." Here our hero could contain himself no longer, but burst out into such an unmannerly fit of laughter, that the master of the house was about to take notice of a

conduct so extraordinary, when poor Vapourley, for it was the gallant youth himself, who now for the first time observed Reybridge, experienced such a revulsion in his whole system, that he sat petrified with astonishment and confusion! This perturbation was too violent to be overlooked, and whilst the company were anxiously waiting for an explanation of these phenomena, our hero turning contemptuously to his shipmate, "Mr. Vapourley," said he, "had you made *me* the subject of your sportive fancy, I should not possibly have thought it worth my while to have interrupted you; but as Mr. Sefton is not present, and I, who am his friend, cannot possibly tell whether he would have been so passive, I must beg you will be pleased to repeat the circumstances of his misfortune with a little more regard to the truth."—"Upon my word, Mr. Reybridge," stammered Vapourley, "I really do not exactly understand—that is, recollect—I do not, I

say—I know not what business, Sir, you have to"—"Gentlemen," interrupted our hero, addressing the company, "I should think all further comment upon Mr. Vapourley's present behaviour unnecessary, did I not believe you would feel interested by a true statement of this affair." Our hero then briefly related the whole of the business, dwelling on the noble conduct of his friend, and the wretched cowardice of his present worthy shipmate, who, rather than venture into the boat, because the sea was a little higher than usual, would have seen both his friend and himself sink to rise no more! "I wished," continued the noble-minded Ralph, "to have avoided a public exposure of this gentleman, and, had he shown the slightest remarks of real concern for the falsehoods he had uttered, I should have been satisfied; but his miserable evasion, and absurd attempt, to retort upon me was not to be endured!" The indignation with which this account was heard, even

by Vapourley's friends, who in vain looked towards him for a reputation, vented itself in groans and murmurs, and some of the company were on the point of rising to take their leave of the host, deeming it dishonourable to their characters to sit longer in the society of such a despicable wretch, when the puissant hero himself, equally impelled by shame, rage, and confusion, suddenly snatched up his hat, and hurried out of the house.

CHAP. X.

Another Fleet arrives from England.—Ralph receives a letter from Mr. Valpine, which is full of extraordinary matter.—His suspicions of Bayburn increase.—He goes to Mr. Zaccary, learns the worst, and determines to visit Sefton.

A FORTNIGHT subsequent to the events recorded in our last chapter, another fleet arrived from Europe, and our hero, in the expectation of receiving a letter of forgiveness from his dear tutor, as well as dispatches from Mr. Valpine and his friend Fitzallen, forgot for a time his apprehensions concerning Bayburn, painful as they were. He repaired immediately to the post-office; but to his severe regret and disappointment, was presented only with one letter from Valpine, from

which circumstance he concluded that Mr. Denham still continued inexorable, and that the poor lieutenant's excursion to Dublin had altogether failed; for Fitz-allen had positively assured him, that, if his claim to his cousin's legacy proved successful, nothing should prevent him from either writing himself, or getting Mrs. Fitzallen to inform him. Our hero now broke open the letter from Valpine, and read as follows:

Rothwell Castle, May 14th, 17—.

"My dear Ralph,

"You will be much surprized, no doubt, to receive a letter from me, dated at the mansion of the Earl of Ardendale, your old tutor's patron, but this business will be explained in its course.

"I believe you did not see Mr. Rushden the short time he remained at Stoke Hill, on the unfortunate evening of Mrs. Reybridge's death; you, however, must have heard that both he and his wife

left Newton Vale in consequence of Lord Ardendale's request, that they should make a part of the domestic establishment at Rothwell Castle. At the time you quitted England, a marriage was in agitation in that noble family, between the heir thereof, Lord Westmore, and Miss Leybrook, a young heiress, of immense fortune.

"Lord Ardendale had previously proposed, that after its celebration the young pair should set off for Ireland, to reside a few months at an old family estate there called Iversfield; for which purpose, it was determined that Mr. and Mrs. Rushden should go before, and get every thing in order for the reception of the young couple; Mrs. Rushden in her capacity as companion to the fair bride, and Rushden as steward of the household. All these particulars came to my knowledge subsequently, of course, to the melancholy events that placed me in my

present situation, but I shall now go on regularly with my story.

"I think it might be about a fortnight after you had left us, that as Mrs. Valpine and myself were sitting by the fire, and hoping that the East India fleet had escaped a *violent* gale of wind that had been blowing for three or four days, a loud knocking at the door alarmed us, and presently the servant announced, to our infinite astonishment, Lord Westmore!—I had never seen his Lordship, but I knew it could be no other than the son of the Earl of Ardendale. Before my wife and I had time to return his salutation, he informed us that a favourite servant had met with an accident, by falling from his horse, just opposite our door, and that he had taken the liberty of ordering him to be brought in, till medical assistance should arrive, for which he had instantly sent. Mr. Valpine immediately ordered every possible aid to be admini-

stered to the poor man, and whilst the surgeon was dressing a severe fracture in the head, Lord Westmore informed me that a packet had been lost off the Welch coast, and that only a few lives had been saved from the wreck.—' I am,' continued his Lordship, ' on my return to my father's seat in Northamptonshire, after a fruitless search for two valuable friends, that had settled to embark on board this ill-fated vessel at Holyhead, and who are doubtless among those that have perished !' I did not immediately think of the Rushdens, but named Mr. Denham;' ' Mr. Denham ?' repeated he.—' Are you acquainted with Lord Ardendale, Sir, and do you know Mr. Denham ?' I then acquainted Lord Westmore who I was, and he was pleased to testify his satisfaction in having met me. He inquired particularly into my views and circumstances, which, owing to some little contingencies not to be foreseen, were rather beginning to decline, and seemed

to be much interested by the account I gave him.

"But I will not, my dear Ralph, keep you long in suspense as to the result of this fortunate meeting. A few days of unremitting attention on the part of Mrs. Valpine and the surgeon to the servant placed him out of danger; and Lord Westmore giving me a hint that I might probably, ere long, hear from him, departed for Rothwell Castle.

"About a week after his departure, I received a letter from my noble young friend, informing me, that having acquainted his father, the Earl, of what he was pleased to term my worth and talents, and also of the good and amiable qualities of Mrs. Valpine, he had it in command to inform me, that, if we should like to supply the situations in his family, which had been vacated by the melancholy end of the Rushdens, we should be welcome at Rothwell Castle, whenever we might be prepared to come.

"Many circumstances, Ralph, not necessary to be here set down, rendered this change in our affairs, if not absolutely expedient, a matter of great accommodation both to Mrs. Valpine and myself. Alas! I knew not how soon she, poor woman, was to experience that *mortal* change, from which there is no escaping.—Yes, my dear Ralph, I know your grateful heart will feel for the death of your friend.—She was suddenly seized and carried off by a paralytic stroke a few days only before we had resolved on our departure for Rothwell.

"I must not dwell on a subject so painful to my remembrance; suffice it to say, that after I had paid the last sad duty to her remains, I set off for the Castle, and was received in the most friendly and courteous manner, both by the Earl and my benefactor. Prejudice, my friend, increases with age. By Mr. Denham I was barely recognised with civility, and though he was well apprized of my having

taken *you* under my protection, and supplied you with the means of securing a good fortune, yet he made no inquiries about you, and indeed it should seem as if he meant to resent the circumstance of my having befriended the man, he had, I must say so unfeelingly, deserted.

" Thus you see, my dear boy, all hopes of a reconciliation from that quarter are at an end; and I would advise you by no means to make any more advances, which would only be treated with contempt.

" As you must, in future, depend upon your own exertions, I would recommend it to you by all means to enter into partnership with some respectable merchant, and settle altogether at Madras. Temperance in your diet, and regular exercise, will render the climate healthful; in the course of a few years you will have an opportunity of marrying, and, if a family should follow, you will, I apprehend, feel little inclination to return to this land of turmoil and vexation.

"At all events, you will not return till you can live in comfort and independence. God knows how long I may remain in my present situation!—Lord Ardendale, it is true, acts on the most liberal scale; and his son honours me with particular marks of his esteem, but I have a great deal to do in my department as steward, and I feel I get old and idle. Miss Leybrook has not yet given her fair hand to Lord Westmore, but, I hope for his sake, the time is not at any great distance. Direct your letters to me at Rothwell Castle, and be particular in letting me know in what way you have employed your little fortune. Your generosity to Fitzallen cannot certainly be blamed, but surely, my young friend, it was premature. You must not suffer this charitable disposition of yours to show itself indiscriminately, or you will be continually exposed to imposition—*Cave.*

"It was very kind of my friend Mr. Horton to procure for you letters of re-

commendation; I hope they have been of service to you, but I would not have you build too much upon them. Be careful of your health, and as the good old proverb goes, 'mind the main chance;' you need not, then, court the protection of any body.—Adieu! and believe me

"Your true friend,

"ALEXANDER VALPINE."

Reybridge was extremely affected by many parts of this epistle, and no less surprized at others. Mr. Denham's total neglect of him, after the last explanatory letter he had written from Shrewsbury, seemed to him altogether inexplicable! The sudden and unexpected transition in Valpine's affairs, though so satisfactorily explained, was equally wonderful. The account of Mrs. Valpine's death shocked him very much, and this was succeeded by the most fearful apprehensions for Lieutenant Fitzallen; for he remembered that his friend was about

to embark for Ireland at the same time that this packet was lost, and he also was aware that the lieutenant meant to go by Holyhead; the cautions of Valpine respecting his conduct, and the management of his fortune, were, likewise, so many daggers to his heart; for the dismal reflection that he was now probably deprived of every shilling of it, returned to his mind with double poignancy!

The villainy of Bayburn could scarcely now be doubted, as his ship had been seen and spoken with by many of the vessels that had arrived from the southward; some of whom reported that she was bound for the Dutch settlements to the eastward. Others, that he was making the best of his way to the Cape of Good Hope, but none that he was steering for Madras. In this desperate situation, poor Ralph repaired to the worthy agent of his partner, Mr. Zaccary, to whom he, without ceremony, imparted his suspicions of Captain Bayburn's villainy, and desired to

know how far he was secured from the loss of his property by the covenants that had been mutually signed, sealed, and witnessed. To these interrogatories Mr. Zaccary replied, that he knew not what could be done. That he himself would be as great a loser by Bayburn's unprincipled conduct as any body; and that as for the securities, they were good for nothing, unless the person who engaged in them was present.

Ralph was not such a novice, but that he now saw his weak ground, and that Zaccary was, perhaps, a greater scoundrel than even the accomplished Bayburn himself. Expostulation was, however, too late, and he was obliged to return to his apartments under a heavier load of anxiety and wretchedness than he had ever before experienced.

He was visited on the following morning by his friend Mr. Brummel; who, having slightly reproached him for his precipitate conduct in regard to Bayburn, offered

him such pecuniary assistance as he might immediately require, and advised him by all means to state his grievances to Mr. Macglib. Reybridge returned his warmest thanks to the worthy agent for his kind offer, "which," said the poor youth, "I shall with gratitude accept; but, as to saying any thing further to Mr. Macglib, destitute as my situation may be, I cannot think of it. He has a countenance dressed in smiles, with a heart of marble."—"What then do you purpose to do?" inquired Mr. Brummel, "for I frankly confess to you I fear you will look in vain for the return of the ship Anna."—"Good God!" exclaimed Ralph, "to what a deplorable condition has my folly reduced me! But the will of Heaven be done. It is my intention, benevolent Sir, with your kind assistance, to set out immediately for Ellore, at which place, I understand, Major Penrose and his nephew are at present stationed. The major has expressed a desire to serve me, and I should not, at this

crisis, prove insensible to his kind professions."—"Assuredly not," replied Mr. Brummel, "and I would advise you to set off without further delay. Should any thing favourable occur during your absence, I will take care to let you know. Major Penrose is an officer whose interest with government may be of essential service to you. Come, cheer up, my young friend; things may not yet be quite so bad as we apprehend." Ralph was considerably soothed by the consolation of this excellent man; he accordingly lost no time in preparing for his journey, and having well stocked his palanquin with necessaries, and forwarded his baggage by *coolies*,* he wrote a few lines to Sefton to apprize him of his coming, and departed the day after in tolerable spirits. And here, whilst

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* A cooly is a common carrier, who is occasionally employed in carrying parcels, &c. &c. from one station to another, and hired as a day labourer at a settled salary, regulated in the *Bazars* or market places.

we lament the misfortune of our hero, let us trace it to its source. There cannot be a stronger proof of the weakness and degeneracy of our natures, than when we countenance bad men because they are capable of contributing to our amusement. At the very time that Mr. Bayburn was invited to the houses of some of the best families in the settlement, it was pretty generally known that the same man was a swindler; that he had fled from England with a halter about his neck, to escape a prosecution for fraudulent bankruptcy, and that he had been the sole cause of the failure at Bengal by abuses of trusts reposed in him. But Mr. Bayburn was, nevertheless, a delightful companion! He was extremely good-natured, liberal, and charitable. He was a gentleman of the most polished manners, and elegant education; full of information and anecdote, and sang a capital song. For these reasons were his vile principles overlooked; and for these reasons had he been permit-

ted to fasten his cruel fangs on the helpless, friendless, unsuspicious Reybridge. Had the same villain been as dull as uncouth, and as unsociable in his manners as he was thus lively and entertaining, he would have been generally shunned, and our hero *conscientiously* cautioned by his good friends to have no dealings with such a vagabond. If, notwithstanding his accomplishments, the dignity due to integrity and virtue had been respected, and he had still been avoided, Ralph would have also avoided him; but, when the poor lad saw him caressed by people of acknowledged respectability, he had no reason for suspicion; and he owed his ruin, not so much to the treachery of Bayburn as to the wicked and disgraceful encouragement by which he was supported.

CHAP. XI.

Ralph meets with a very unexpected and dreadful adventure, upon which the author takes the liberty of moralizing.—A succession of incidents which our good-natured readers are recommended not to peruse if they happen to be in bad spirits.

About twenty miles from Ellore our hero's palanquin bearers discovered that they had mistaken the way, and had so entangled themselves in an extensive and intricate jungle, that the darkness of the night prevented their going further with any certainty of recovering the right way; for though there was a *massaljie** with the

* A servant who carries a lamp or torch before a carriage or palanquin, and is employed as a domestic in menial offices.

palanquin, his torch gave but little light. As our traveller had acquired the Gentoo language in some degree, he was able to come to a sort of parley with his boys, from whom, with considerable difficulty, he understood the extent of his misfortune. After some deliberation he determined to halt where he was for the night, and proceed at an early hour on the following morning. When he had intimated his intention to his palanquin boys, they immediately kindled a large fire, over which, whilst they boiled their rice, our hero began to explore the shaggy recesses of the jungle, though the distant howlings of tigers and jackalls, co-operating with the gloom and desolation around, warned him of the danger of wandering too far from his companions. As the darkness increased, and the massaljie's light was almost spent, he was at length on the point of returning, when he was alarmed by sudden shrieks at a distance. He stopped, and listened for some time, expecting, yet dreading, a repetition of sounds which he

was convinced were human, but all was again quiet. He now proceeded on, and had just gained his palanquin, near which a fire was still blazing, and lighted sticks placed round to keep off the tigers, when the dreadful screams again arrested his steps, and which, though fainter than before, he was satisfied proceeded from some fellow-creature in distress. He instantly got into his palanquin, and ordered his boys, who had now finished their rice, to carry him as fast as they could towards the place from whence the sounds had proceeded. The boys obeyed; not, however, without some reluctance, and before they had carried him a hundred paces, the distant roar of tigers so appalled them, that they stopped, and Reybridge, at that moment, jumping out of his palanquin, plainly distinguished, at no great distance, two or three lights waving to and fro. But the palanquin boys and massaljie no sooner observed them, than they uttered a yell of consternation, and ran away as fast as the

darkness of the night and the intricacies of the jungle would permit them.

The Hindoos are more the slaves of superstition than almost any other people under the sun. In the present instance the appearance of two moving lights at such a time, and in a place they knew to be many miles distant from any village or human habitation, was, to Reybridge's companions, a certain indication of the approach of *peisash*.*

Our hero was now left by himself, but he had a mind above being scared by imaginary dangers; and as he still had an idea that some person was in distress, and probably required assistance, real ones would not have withheld him from the duties of humanity. Arming himself, therefore, with one of the palanquin boy's spears, which had been left behind, and taking from his palanquin a bottle of wine, he hastened towards the lights, which now

* The native term for the devil.

appeared to be stationary. As he approached them he was surprized at not seeing any body, particularly as he now perceived they proceeded from a couple of lanterns hung up on the outside of two or three *tatties*.* He, however, plainly observed a light within, and concluded he must have come up with travellers like himself, who had erected this temporary accommodation for the night.

A European in a scarlet jacket now appeared with a small wax candle in his hand, and seeing our hero, instantly ran up to him, and catching him by the arm, with trembling eagerness, "Oh! Sir," said he, "how rejoiced I am to see you; and yet, Sir, I sadly fear *it is all over!*

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* A *tatty* is a kind of fence composed of straw, wood, and a sweet smelling herb the natives call *tettavaroo*. It is usually put up to keep off the land winds, which blow extremely hot at certain seasons of the year, and when constantly watered, the air that blows through them becomes cool and pleasant. To the northward of Madras tatties are indispensable.

But come in, Sir, for God's sake! and see what can be done." Ralph wanted not penetration to discover that he was taken for a medical man, but whilst he was hesitating whether he should do any good by favouring the mistake, the person who had addressed him suspected he had made one. "Alas, Sir!" continued he, "I doubt you are not the doctor from Ellore?" "I am not, indeed, my good friend," replied Reybridge, "but if I can be of any service."—"Oh, God!" interrupted the other, "then the dear young gentleman must die; nothing can save him!"—"Perhaps," replied Ralph, "some wine may be of service."—"That's true, Sir, that's true," replied the man. "Good God! have you got some wine with you? and yet I fear his delirium has quite overcome him!—his *screams*, his dreadful screams! I shall never forget them!"—"Mention them not," interrupted Ralph, shuddering, "but let us hasten to his relief."—"You are very kind, Sir," replied the stranger,

walking before, "but, indeed, I'm sure it is too late; and my poor master! my dear *major!* what will become of him?" This last exclamation was uttered as they were entering the hovel, and the blood curdled in our hero's veins from the terrible apprehension to which it instantaneously gave birth. In one moment he rushed into the presence of the dying man, and in another fell lifeless to the earth! Stretched at his length on the bedding of a palanquin, with a body convulsed, his mouth foaming and half open, his eyes glazed and fixed, his nostrils distended, while the damps of death were creeping over his quivering flesh, lay (ah, whither now were flown his delightful dreams of happiness!) the amiable Sefton! At this moment arrived the doctor from Ellore, and several officers of the garrison. On entering the hovel, a very affecting scene presented itself. Prone on the earth, and near his dying friend, lay our unfortunate hero, apparently already dead. Sefton,

in a sudden interval of reason, was gazing on his body, and striving in vain to throw himself upon it. The effort was too mighty for his little remaining strength; he turned his eyes to Heaven; a short ejaculation seemed to pass his lips; he then sunk down, and, with a short sigh, expired!

Thus perished, in the bloom of youth, the friend of Reybridge! the friend with whose interests he had fondly united his own, and who had proved himself so worthy of his esteem and admiration. Let us pause a little on an incident so awful. Could this catastrophe have been foreseen? No. Could any human event have been less expected? No. Then let it be remembered that in *this* life no situation, however apparently secure, can, or ought to be, enjoyed in the exultation of confidence, and the assurance of long possession; and that we are too apt to fix our whole hopes of happiness upon our present prosperity, without considering how

soon it must pass away even in the ordinary course of nature; not bringing into the account the untimely and unexpected visitations of Providence! Little did poor Sefton think that, whilst he was perusing letters of triumph to his friend, Death stood over him shaking his dart, and "grinning horribly the ghastly smile," that marked him for the grave! Little did he imagine that, whilst he was wantonly ridiculing the industrious shoemaker and tailor, and heaping blessings on the heads of his mistaken parents for making him a gentleman, that the punishment of his foolish pride was so near at hand!

As our happiness therefore, in any condition of life, is so precarious, and as for life itself there is no security, how can a rational mind be so led astray by the mere distinctions of society, distinctions that may attract notice, but can neither reflect virtue nor invite esteem? Every man is entitled to respect who acts his part in the world with zeal and fidelity; and it is no

more disgrace for the tradesman to receive payment for the goods he vends from behind the counter, than the soldier for the death and destruction he deals out from behind the battery.

Show me the family free of some veteran tradesman, whose probity and economy have descended from generation to generation, and I will pay it as much homage as the most umbrageous trunk since the Conquest, though ever so covered with coronets! Nor, while I pay all due reverence to the most noble and most *illustrious* house of D——, will I pass over, unregarded, the most *industrious* and most upright family of the shuttle-weavers in Spital Fields!

As our good-natured readers have, doubtless, been very much impressed by the sudden death of Sefton, and will now be anxious to return to the disconsolate Reybridge, we shall briefly inform them that, acute as his anguish was on his first restoration to sense, he had sufficient for-

titude to resist its increasing influence. The solemn and indispensable duties of resignation had been strongly impressed on his mind by Mr. Denham, and by calling religion to his aid, he was able to sustain himself during a trial more severe than his heart had ever before experienced.

As it became necessary to bury the body as soon* as possible, a mortification in the bowels having taken place, and as there was no safe or expeditious way of carrying it to Vellore, a grave was dug in the sands in the thickest part of the jungle, and a kind of coffin prepared by the doctor, and the officers that had accompanied him, in which it was reposited. The only difficulty was the want of a prayer-book, that the service of the dead might be read

* A corpse so soon becomes putrid in hot climates, especially in the East Indies, that it is absolutely necessary interment should take place within twelve hours after dissolution.

over it; but our hero, who almost knew the whole of this awful and impressive composition by heart, repeated the latter part of it as the coffin was let down, and with as much effect and solemnity as though he had been an archbishop consigning a monarch to the magnificent tomb of his illustrious ancestors. Hitherto he had supported himself with admirable firmness, but when he gazed upon the remains of his friend, the preserver of his life, for the last time, the gush of nature could no longer be suppressed. "Ah, my best beloved!" cried he, the tears streaming from his eyes, "my dearest friend! my own Tom! must I then, indeed, lose thee? Can it be possible? So short a time; so short a time since possessed of health, youth, blooming expectations, now all, all blighted! When shall I find my gallant, my generous, my life's preserver, when must I look for merit such as thine? a disposition so sweet, a heart so warm, a spirit so aspiring, a fancy

so vivacious! Never, never, can I find it! But," continued he, falling on his knees, and devoutly raising his eyes to Heaven, "My hope shall be in thee, O Lord! who hast here wonderfully proved that 'in the midst of life we are in death;' my hope shall be in thee! and that hope assures me we shall one day, my Sefton, meet again, never, never more to part."

This pathetic tribute to the memory of his friend was heard by the bye standers with respect, and not without emotion. The doctor, in particular, was affected, and requested that he might have the satisfaction of introducing him to Major Penrose. Our hero returned his thanks, and the grave being now filled up, and secured as well as possible by fragments of rock till a stone could be properly placed over it, the party returned to Vellore, Ralph travelling in his own palanquin, which his bearers had by this time

brought up, and the good doctor on horseback.

The honest servant who had attended poor Sefton during his short but severe sufferings, had no sooner witnessed his last sighs than he mounted his horse and posted off to Ellore with the fatal intelligence. The major received the news with deep concern, but the scenes of slaughter and misfortune in which he had been brought up prevented him from betraying a weakness which he would have considered unbecoming his character and profession. Our hero's sudden appearance and affecting grief were then imparted to him, and by the servant's description, the major immediately guessed who it must be, though he had not seen Ralph's last letter.

On the arrival of the doctor and our hero at Ellore, the latter was introduced to the old soldier, which ceremony occasioned another burst of tears.

The major, however, paid them due re-

spect, and taking him affectionately by the hand, "Young gentleman," said he, "I have long wished to know you, but I little thought our introduction to each other would have been preceded by an event so melancholy. My poor boy loved you, I perceive, with reason. It was a blow I did not expect; but God's will be done!" Here the major, maugre all his dignity and fortitude, was compelled to blow his nose very stoutly, and Ralph again pressed his handkerchief to his eyes. Some refreshments were now brought, and the parties having recruited their spirits with a glass of wine and some biscuits, Ralph requested the major to inform him of the particulars of his dear Tom's conduct since their separation at Madras, his sudden illness, and the occasion of his having been left in a situation so destitute as that in which he had found him. To this requisition the worthy officer immediately complied; but, as our readers

may have been variously affected already by the contents of this Chapter, we shall give them a little respite, and begin the major's recital with the next.

CHAP. XII.

In which the major begins, and makes an end of his narrative without the author's venturing to interrupt him.—More generosity, more gratitude, and a resolution that will perhaps please, though it will not surprize.—Ralph shows certain symptoms of insanity, *which the sagacious reader will doubtless discover before he concludes this chapter.*

"My dear boy," began the major, "behaved with so much steadiness, bravery, and good conduct during our late little service in the field, that he attracted the attention, and received the applause of Colonel Manningham, who promised to support my application to government in his favour, with all his interest. Greatly flattered by this unexpected encourage-

ment, he devoted almost the whole of his time to the study of the Persian language, and according to his **moonchie's* account would very soon have made a considerable progress therein, difficult as it is generally allowed to be.

"A week ago he was preparing to join his own battalion at Visagapatam, but, on my application was permitted to remain on the strength of this garrison, and procured an exchange into the same regiment of which I have the honour to be major.

"The day before yesterday he received my permission to accompany some of his brother officers, three of whom you may have seen at his burial, on a hunting excursion: I confess, rather contrary to my wishes, for the weather had been very hot for a week before, and when I saw him mount his horse, his spirits high,

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* *Moonchie* is a teacher of the country languages.

and his blood heated, I felt a strange anxiety about him, and cautioned him not to fatigue himself if he found the exercise too violent; nay, in order to secure his obedience, I desired that Mackay, the servant you saw with him in his last moments, might be one of the party, as he was well acquainted with the roads. Indeed, my dear young friend, I take blame upon myself for letting him go; but I was induced by the mistaken idea that the sooner a young soldier is inured to toil and fatigue, the better, without reflecting that poor Tom was composed of too delicate materials to bear those exertions which a practised officer thinks nothing of, and that in the first instance they should be proportioned to the strength, without consulting the inclination."—Here Ralph could not suppress a deep groan, which the major answered with a sigh, and then continued.—"In the evening the hunting party returned; but to my astonishment, without either

my nephew or his servant Mackay. On enquiring, I was told by Mr. Richards, one of the officers, that in expectation of starting some wild hogs among the deep jungles to the northward of Vellore, they had pursued that course, riding very hard the whole way; that whilst they were beating about for game, they had missed both Sefton and his servant, and the day closing in without their rejoining the party, it was generally concluded that they had returned to the fort. As I knew my man was well acquainted with these jungles, I felt little apprehension that they had lost themselves; yet I could not observe the night wearing away without suffering the greatest anxiety. Early on the following morning, a cooly arrived with a little scrap of paper on which were scrawled with a pencil, and in a hand scarcely legible, the following words:

'Sir,

'Pray make haste and send

the doctor to the jungles, my dear young master is very ill indeed, and cannot be moved. No time must be lost!'

"I shall not say any thing of my sensations at this moment, you will readily guess how I must have felt. Dr. Malcolm, the gentleman who this morning introduced you to me, was at this time, unluckily, at a village called Chinnorgoody, a place about eight miles off; he nevertheless obeyed my immediate summons, and, though greatly fatigued by the haste he had made to Vellore, only waited to put some medicines in his pocket, and then hurried on, accompanied by the young men you saw, to the fatal jungles.

"Mackay's report of the material circumstances which preceded the death of my poor boy was given to me this morning before your arrival. You will be too much affected possibly to hear it."—"Oh! no," replied Ralph, "let me hear

all!"—The major then continued.—"Sefton, it seems, had galloped so far into the jungle, that in attempting to return by the same route, he lost his way, and Mackay himself, who had followed him, was equally perplexed. At this time he complained of an acute pain in his head, with sickness at the stomach, but anxious to recover his party, he continued to ride on, notwithstanding the persuasions and remonstrances of Mackay, increasing the heat of his blood, and the dreadful fever that was then ready to seize him. The approach of night, and the anxiety of his mind now operating to increase his indisposition, he suffered his servant to persuade him to dismount, and rest a little on one of the fragments of rock with which these jungles abound. By nine o'clock the fever had gained so fast upon him, that the servant found it would be impossible to proceed further that night without the most dangerous consequences ensuing; quitting him, therefore, he re-

mounted his horse, and rode backwards and forwards several miles in quest of some hut, wherein the poor sufferer might be sheltered for the night, but no vestige of a human habitation was to be seen. Almost as ill as my poor boy, the faithful fellow still preserved his presence of mind, and returning to the spot where he had left his precious charge, and taking him in his arms, he conveyed, and placed him under the shade of one of the thickest trees, putting his own coat over him, to defend him as much as possible from the wind and the dews. I need not, indeed I cannot describe the horrors of this night! The following morning, as Mackay was preparing to gallop to Ellore himself, for medical assistance, some coolies made their appearance through the trees of the jungle loaded with baggage, amongst which were several bamboo poles, a palanquin, and chest of cordials, together with several tatties. These, Mackay with some difficulty detained; and by the as-

sistance of the coolies erected a temporary shed for my unfortunate boy, who was by this time in a raging fever. The bedding was then taken from the palinquin, on which he was, as soon as it was practicable, placed. The cordials, however, were too powerful; plain Madeira wine might probably have been of service, but that was not to be procured. One of the coolies had been instantly dispatched to Ellore, with the scrap of paper I before mentioned; in the mean time the dreadful fever increased, and towards the evening delirium ensued. His agonies, his screams!"—"For heaven's sake", interrupted Ralph, "do not call them to my remembrance."—"I beg pardon," replied the major; "I had forgot, that about this time you, my young friend, must have been attracted to the scene of woe.—As the night set in, Mackay contrived to strike a light, and as there were candles in the palanquin lamps, he fixed these to the bamboo that

supported the tatties, as a beacon for the guidance of the doctor.

"The catastrophe need not be repeated; yet, perhaps, it will be some satisfaction to you to know that whilst you lay on the ground, deprived of sense, my poor boy had a short interval of reason, during which, he saw and recollected you!" "How, Sir!" cried Reybridge, "did he indeed recollect me?"—"He did;" returned the major, "and as his eyes were devoutly raised towards heaven, his lips seemed to move a blessing on your name!" —"And he died easily?" resumed our hero.—"The doctor thinks," replied the major, "that the mortification must have commenced from the cessation of his screams, and the return of his intellects: of course, long before you saw him, his sufferings must have subsided."—"Thank God! thank God!" exclaimed Ralph, "that is some comfort.—Poor Tom! but we shall meet again!"

In the course of the three following

days, Reybridge was prevailed upon, by Major Penrose, who had conceived a great regard for him, to relate the principal occurrences of his life, which Sefton had often mentioned in a jocular way, as being full enough of the extraordinary to make a modern novel. Ralph, who felt no false pride in recounting his present deplorable condition to a generous man, who had both the power and inclination to serve him, did not, in this narrative, (which he began from the account he had formerly received from his tutor of his christening to the present period) pass over a single particular, and at the conclusion, left his worthy and attentive auditor in a state of doubt and astonishment.—After a long pause, "There are parts in your story, my young friend," observed he, "which Providence only can clear up. Of these, the mystery of your birth is one, and the contradictory conduct of Mr. Valpine another."—"*His* conduct then, Sir, as having been con-

tradictory," replied Ralph " you do not conceive to be altogether fair?"—" I will tell you what I think," returned the major, " when I have perused the letter you say you have received from this gentleman."—Ralph produced it accordingly, and the good officer took as much time in perusing and reperusing it, as it had taken our hero to relate his history. At length the epistle was returned, and another pause succeeded.—" You seem at a loss what to think about my concerns, my dear major?" observed Reybridge.—" I am, indeed!" replied the major, " yet of two things I do not doubt, notwithstanding every favourable appearance to the contrary."—" And what are these, Sir?" replied Ralph with emotion.—" That Valpine and his wife, though they might have originally conspired to place you in gaol, were but *agents* in liberating you therefrom, and driving you from your native country. Depend upon it, my dear Ralph, Lieutenant Fitzallen is right.

Valpine is assuredly a villain! And your tutor, by some secret machinations, has been grossly deceived in you. It appears to me, that Mrs. Reybridge on her death-bed must have named your *mother* as well as your father; to which title Mr. Mapleton has undoubtedly a very strong claim; and that although Mr. Rushden was by at the time, he *might* have been interested by the name of this mother. Who knows but she might have been, (excuse me for the suggestion) an object of *frailty*, powerful and rich enough to purchase the silence of these people: and was not the needy Valpine a likely person to propose such terms of accommodation? The letter which I have just read, convinces me that this man has some design in wishing you to *settle* in India; and my further opinion is, that the mysterious person, whoever he or she may be, who has the *nearest* claim to your duty and affection, has dictated this letter, with the hope that it will influence your con-

duct, and fix you here during life. The deaths of Mr. Rushden and Mrs. Valpine are indeed to be deplored; for now, should the circumstances attending Mrs. Reybridge's dying moments *be* false, the true account must ever remain a secret in the breast of the villain who was the original instigator of the falsehood. I could speak to other points in your story that amaze me, but as I cannot, in any way account for them, I will not raise a curiosity, I cannot even gratify by conjecture. This however, depend upon; you are at present, perhaps, made subservient to some vile imposition, or are yourself the destined victim of imposition. Convinced of this, I would advise you to lose no time in returning to England, and demanding an interview of the good Mr Denham. Your affecting letters, rely upon it, have *never* reached him: not even the *last* you wrote. The whole of your conduct has been misrepre-

sented to him, and this moment possibly, he is ignorant of your real situation. This you must do, Ralph, if ever you expect to have the dark mystery of your birth unfolded; nor wilfully neglect the opportunities Providence may be graciously pleased to favour you with towards the accomplishment of an event, which may ultimately raise you from obscurity to the joyful knowledge of beloved kindred and friends. Oh, my dear boy, you know not half the iniquity of this world, and what deep designers are capable of doing. The treacherous conduct of the scoundrel Bayburn cannot be helped, but it shall not prevent your return to England. I will supply you with all necessaries for your voyage, and accommodate you with five hundred pounds to bear you safely to that protecting friend you should never have quitted, your virtuous and venerable tutor. I will also write to day to my agents about your passage by one of the first ships."—

Here the generous old soldier was interrupted by a gush of tears from Ralph, and an intellectual attempt to speak, which Major Penrose observing, "Come, come, young man," continued he, "no more of this, and by the bye, don't run away with a notion that I shall not charge you lawful interest for this loan, and if you make any more noise about it, I'll have a premium besides."—"You will indeed, my noble friend," replied Ralph, "have a *premium*; one adequate to your deserts, but, not in this world!"—"Pho, pho, stuff!" resumed the major. "Attention, and let me have my speech out. I say I will also give you dispatches to my poor sister, Mrs. Sefton, and her husband. Their Tom's untimely fate will almost break their hearts, but you must comfort them, my boy, as well as you can. You will meet with the kindest reception; for my sister is an excellent woman, and with a very fine understanding. Old Sefton, too, though a little bit of a plebeian,

may be of great service to you in giving you advice on certain points." Here our hero would again have spoken, but the good major prevented him, nor had he any other way of expressing the emotions of gratitude that swelled his heart, than by pressing his benefactor's hand.

What Major Penrose had said respecting his concerns at home, sunk deep into his mind. Yet he could not reflect without shuddering, that though an illegitimate child, his parent (a mother too) should abandon him; should even engage the assistance of a villian to keep him from her sight. And who could this mother be? That Valpine was this villian too, was a circumstance he could not bear to think upon, for he recoiled at the supposition of having been made the dupe of artifices so nefarious.

Notwithstanding the major's liberal determination in his favour, Ralph continued for several days to entertain a hope, that the good ship Anna would return,

till one morning, his military friend put him out of his pain, by reading from a Madras newspaper the following paragraph.—"A few weeks since, after a smart action of twenty minutes, was captured, off the Sand heads, by one of the enemy's cruisers, the Anna brig, Captain Bayburn, mounting fifteen guns. The captain was unfortunately killed in the beginning of the engagement."—"Unhappy man!" cried Ralph, forgetful of his own irretrievable loss; "oh major, I dread to think of this shocking circumstance! Summoned thus to the presence of his Maker, his crimes unrepented of! Poor man!" Penrose was wonderfully struck with this noble instance of christian charity!—You are a generous lad!" exclaimed he, warmly embracing him, "and if you do not, henceforth, consider me as *one* of your guardians, at least, I will never forgive you! But you *shall* do so, I command you, and my

word of command was never yet disobeyed."

The major, in conformity to these arrangements respecting our hero, wrote immediately to Madras, and in the course of ten days, received information from his agents that the regular fleet of Indiamen had arrived from Bengal, and would be dispatched in a fortnight. That according to his directions, they had secured accommodations for Mr. Reybridge in the Rose, Captain Hagster, for which he would have to pay 250*l*. This point being ascertained, the major resolved to accompany his young friend to the Presidency, and for that purpose wrote and obtained leave of absence from his station. Besides a wish to see Ralph safe over the surf, he was not without apprehensions that the good youth would only take up in part the bill he had intended to grant him upon his agents, and that his false delicacy would leave him pennyless on his arrival in England.

Matters were settled thus far, when Reybridge, the morning before their departure, took his benefactor apart, and, with tears in his eyes, presented him with a scroll of paper, on which was neatly written an inscription to the memory of his beloved friend, followed by a *poetical* effusion; the first, among many, he had ever ventured to expose to another's eye. "This, dear Sir," said he, "was my employment yesterday, on being told that there was a native in the garrison equally expert and expeditious as a stone-cutter. It will be a mournful satisfaction to me, hereafter, to reflect that some monument of my dear Tom is erected, even in the gloomy solitude where his remains are deposited, and that I (though humble indeed the attempt) contributed something to the memorial." The major received the paper with a smile of benevolence, and having glanced his eye over the whole, asked Ralph how long he had been a poet? "Ah, major," replied our hero, "do not

judge of this poor tribute as coming from the head, but the *heart*."—"Well, Ralph," replied the good man, "I won't—but I must still think your lines very pretty." A compliment, which, probably, our young poet would not have relished so much as he did, had he known that this worthy son of Mars had never read ten lines of poetry in his life.

The stone-cutter, was, however, immediately sent for, and directions given to him to prepare the monument without loss of time. "I will myself," said the major, "attend the execution and erection of this grateful tribute, my dear boy; and hope to tell you by the next ships, that every thing is completed." Reybridge was greatly comforted by this kind assurance, and the sculptor went to work without delay on the following Inscription and Verses.

Beneath this Stone
are deposited the Remains of
THOMAS SEFTON.
Ensign in the Service of the Honourable
East India Company.

A violent fever overtook him in the jungle, and put a period to his existence before medical assistance could be procured. United to him by ties of the warmest gratitude, and the tenderest regard, and fondly mindful of those virtues and talents, which rendered him at once respected and beloved by all who had sensibility to discern his merits, this monument is erected by his disconsolate friend,

RALPH REYBRIDGE.

Sweet Muse, that oft along the shadowy glade
Hast sung of youth and innocence betray'd,
Hast woo'd, with pensive steps, the midnight gloom,
To breathe thy sorrows o'er the lover's tomb!
Oh! come: once more thy cypress garland wave,
Thy gentlest strain attune o'er SEFTON's grave.

Ill-fated youth! on thee, while Fortune's smile
And Hope's soft flatt'ry beam'd, but to beguile;
While Friendship's gifts allur'd, and led the way
To fairer prospects, and a brighter day;
(As oft to thy lov'd home and native skies
Fond expectation turn'd thy longing eyes!—)
'Twas hard, at Death's command, so soon to part
With the sweet solaces that warm'd thy heart;
And ah! what bitter anguish mark'd the hour
That yielded thee the victim of his power!—
O'er whose sad couch no anxious listener hung
To catch the last wish from thy faltering tongue;
No tender friend to soothe thee—to assuage
The mind's sharp conflict 'midst the fever's rage!
To feel thy sorrows, all thy sufferings share,
And to thy kindred thy last blessings bear!

Yet though 'midst trackless wilds thy relics rest,
And burning sands lie heavy on thy breast;
Though no fresh flowers around thy ashes bloom;
Though no funereal honours grace thy tomb;
Though Philomel's soft song shall never raise
Her sweetly soothing tribute to thy praise;
Yet, weeping Fancy shall assert thy fame,
And oft upon these rocks imprint thy name;
Benevolence and Truth protect with pride
The sacred spot where their lov'd vot'ry died!—

And, at the last, when beams celestial day,
And the world's idle pomp dissolves away;
When dreadful in his wrath, th' Almighty shrouds
His gleamy terrors in a night of clouds!
When power's vast fabric shall be rent in twain,
And monumental flatt'ries plead in vain!
On thy lone grave the *Sun of Peace* shall shine;
Thy guardian Saint the hallow'd dust enshrine;
Pluck the rude bramble from thy humble sod,
And bear thee to the bosom of thy God!

CHAP. XIII.

Being the shortest in the Book.

THE melancholy circumstances attending young Sefton's death had been the topic of general conversation at Madras; and though, in the East Indies, it is no uncommon thing for a man to die one day, be buried the next, and forgotten on the third; yet, in the present instance, the *novelty* of the thing had claimed a much longer spell of pity, and the compassionate buzz on the occasion had scarcely subsided, when the major and our hero made their appearance in the settlement. As major Penrose was generally known and respected by the higher circles of Madras, the subject was, of course, renewed with many consolatory accompaniments which the old soldier

would gladly have dispensed with. Ralph too, under such protection and recommendation, received flattering marks of distinction from people that would scarcely notice him before, and even Counsellor Macglib now condescended to hint to him, that if he could be of service to him in retrieving his late losses by recommending him to any of the houses of business, he should be very glad. The ladies too, now began to discover in him certain pretensions to the character of a gentleman, they had not been able to distinguish before, and the spinsters generally agreed, that, if the *pagodas* had not been wanting, there must have been great pulling of caps for him: all, but Miss Standen, his old messmate. She, indeed, for reasons very well known to the reader, could see nothing so outrageously attractive in the lad; and wondered people should make such a fuss about him.

We must however, in justice to the taste of the majority, acknowledge, that

our hero *was* a most engaging *youth*. He was now in his twenty-third year, of a middle stature, and very elegantly formed. His features were not exactly regular; but his complexion was clear and healthy, his countenance open and expressive, his address easy and engaging, and there was a vivacity and sensibility in every word and action that warmly interested every observer. His eyes were rather soft than piercing, beaming intelligence, and speaking the sincerity and tenderness of his heart. Yet, notwithstanding all these perfections, "Dan Cupid," as Sir John Suckling calls him, (and whom the ladies must allow to be sometimes a very capricious chap) had not, hitherto, thought him worthy of a place in his kalendar, but permitted the insensible varlet to meet the brightest eyes in the assembly rooms with impunity. One or two rich widows had even gone so far as to shake their pagoda bags at

him, but all in vain, the fate of his heart was to be decided elsewhere.

At length, the time arrived when Ralph was once more to buffet the waves, and yield to the vagaries of fortune, with an order on Mr. M——'s house in London for 200*l.* and fifty guineas in specie in his pocket. The worthy and generous major accompanied him to the massoola boat, and affectionately embracing him, "In the course of a few years, my dear lad," said he, "God willing, we shall meet again. In the mean time, whatever may be your future destination, I am convinced you will find, in the parents of our dear lamented Tom, warm and constant friends; and you will recollect in what light I have *commanded* you to consider me.—Farewell!—remember to see your tutor before you see Valpine, otherwise, villainy may still be able to counteract and deceive; and some dark story, I am convinced, is yet to be told about you.

Once more adieu! and a soldier's blessing go with you!" Reybridge now tore himself from the embrace of his noble benefactor, and half an hour conveyed him to much such another cabin as he had had on board the Phœnix. Here he yielded to the strong and various emotions that pressed upon his heart; and here we think proper to leave him to his meditations, and put an end to the chapter.

CHAP. XIV.

The Author waves his magic quill, and a great deal is said and done in a very few pages.

METHINKS I hear some of my fair readers exclaim—" Bless me!—now we shall be pestered to death with ship jargon again! with Miss Standens, Mr. Vapourleys, Neptunes, and stuff, when we want to return to England and the cream of the story. To see, perhaps, (delightful idea!) old Mrs. Reybridge's ghost! which surely, in the common course of events, must now be raised; else, how is Ralph's birth to be discovered?—Perhaps, to see the good Mr. Denham promoted to a bishopric, or Mr. Valpine to the gallows!" To prevent the possibility of a murmur, therefore, from a quarter

of so much consequence, as Prospero,* by a wave of his wand, was able to waft the king's ship safely and speedily back to Naples, so *we*, by one dash of our magic pen, do as safely bring into the English Channel, the good ship the Rose, Captain Hagster commander, after a very good passage of about *five minutes*, from the Madras roads.

Dr. Johnson has whimsically compared a ship to a prison, with the chance of being drowned. And, in truth, unless it be commanded by such a man as Captain Daventry, Newgate will scarcely prove much worse. Captain Hagster was, unfortunately, the very reverse of this gentleman; for his knowledge extended no further than to the ropes of his vessel. He was capricious and tyrannical among his officers and crew, and his table was crowded with men, who, like himself, were only in their element when they could

* Vide Shakspeare's Tempest.

have a free swing of drinking and swearing; our hero, therefore, had seldom quitted his cabin during the voyage, and when he went ashore, which he contrived to do with the purser, at Plymouth, he took leave of this worthy commander and his gang with sensations similar to those a debtor experiences when he bids adieu to the keeper and turnkeys of his gaol!

The purser, whose name was Tattertrap, ordered the porters, on landing, to convey his baggage and the government dispatches to the Angel Inn; at which house of entertainment, Reybridge also thought it advisable, under so respectable a convoy, to halt; but, on their arrival, he was surprized to observe a very shabby looking house, over the door of which the remains of a figure that had originally been designed for an angel, was scarcely to be distinguished for the dirt that covered it. Here, Mr. Tattertrap, whose lungs, owing to the submissive whispers with which he had been

compelled on every occasion to address the surly tyrant of the Rose, required a little distention, lifted up his voice, and with a tone and consequence that would have become the first Duke in the land, gave orders for a chaise and four immediately for Ivy-bridge!

Notwithstanding the miserable appearance of the inn in question, a chaise and four was almost instantly ready, and Mr. Tattertrap, having seen his luggage securely fastened, might have accommodated poor Ralph and his little trunk, without much inconvenience, had he not recollected that gentlemen of rank and fortune very frequently travel with their *servants.*

Now, as Mr. Tattertrap knew he could only enjoy his present greatness till his arrival in Leadenhall-street, he did not choose to run the risk of having it wrested from him by the elegant figure of our hero; for he very shrewdly suspected that in travelling together, one of them

would be taken for the servant of the other, and his conscience very candidly told him which it would be.

Oh, Pride! how bountiful art thou in thy dispensations! to the rightful claimant or the pretender thou showerest down thy consequence alike, and equally to virtue and to vice art lavish of thy flattery. Whilst the good man is *proud* of his heart of benevolence, an integrity not to be corrupted, and a fortitude not to be assailed, the bad man is *proud* of that sophistry and dissimulation by which he can turn such excellencies to his own advantage. The fond husband is *proud* of his chaste and prudent wife; the libertine is *proud* of those arts by which he hopes to undermine her fidelity. Politicians are *proud* of their speeches and their plans, Generals of their conquests, and children of their toys.

But though the Angel had so readily supplied Mr. Tattertrap with horses to carry him away, it could not so conve-

niently accommodate the customer that was left behind. Ralph, indeed, had he not been so very young a traveller, would have known, that in every provincial town in England, the best and the worst horses are to be found at those houses where there is a lack of every other kind of convenience.

A man who wishes to travel expeditiously will no more stop at an inn full of gay company, flashy waiters, and a fine sign of a lion rampant over his head, to have four fresh horses put to his chaise, than he will at the parish church. Indeed, the stables of these great inns are rather built for the accommodation of families than the passing traveller; who, though he himself may be very sumptuously served within, his poor horse is fain to put up with short commons under some old shed, exposed to the weather, and without a truss of straw to lie upon, because there is no room for him elsewhere. For my own part, I love, on these occasions, to see

my faithful four-legged servant as well off as myself, and have frequently been tempted to put up, in preference, at the honest sign-post by the road side, that tells me fairly there is entertainment for both man and horse; for I know I shall there get a wholesome, though not a very luxurious meal, with the additional satisfaction of being assured that my companion is at the same time munching his oats very comfortably in the adjoining stable.

Our landlord of the Angel knew he had nothing in the house, he nevertheless told Ralph he could have any thing for his dinner he chose; and, like Boniface in the play, mentioned several excellent dishes which he was afterwards obliged to confess were not to be procured. Our hero, fortunately, was no epicure; and mine host was delighted to find that he started no objections to a neck of mutton and turnips which were then boiling in the pot for his own dinner.

Ralph began now to consider which way he should bend his course.—Whether to proceed immediately to Rothwell Castle, and demand the first audience of Mr. Denham, as he had been advised by his benefactor the major; or else, to go first to London and deliver his dispatches to the Sefton family. He considered that his finances in specie had been reduced to a few guineas, owing to the fleet having been detained six weeks at St. Helena for convoy, and that before he could possibly travel into Northamptonshire, he should be obliged to have recourse to his draft, which after all, perhaps, he would not be able to get discounted. He therefore determined to repair, in the first instance, to town; and accordingly, having summoned the landlord, he declared his intention, and desired that a place might be secured for him forthwith in the Plymouth coach, which he understood set out every morning for Exeter.

The landlord, who was of the talkative

breed of inn-keepers, rightly judging from the youth and diffidence of our hero that he was rather an inexperienced guest, ventured to propose that his honour might as lieve stay a few days to see the Plymouth lions.—" As you be jus coom from board ship," observed he, " belike, young gentleman, you'll be pleased with many things you'll see in our town, and at Dock, and Stonehouse.—There be few towns in England, Sir, like to ourn, thof I do say it, who a lived here, come next Candlemas-day, man and boy, this five and thirty years."—" Well," replied Reybridge.—" And what's to be seen here? Any thing extraordinary?"—" I don't know," rejoined mine host, " what you may call extrornary, but there be the finest dock for shipping, in Christendom, and there be besides, Mount Edgecombe, and the Hamouse, that all the world have a bin to see."

" Well, well," replied Ralph, after I have dined, I should like to take a stroll

about the towns you have mentioned, especially as the afternoon promises so fine an evening; and, if you will suffer one of your people to go with me, and show me the way, I shall be obliged to you." The worthy inn-keeper having accordingly summoned a waiter—"Jem," said he, "tell *our* Ben to get his dinner, quickly, and be ready to go with this gentleman to Dock and Stonehouse, and show un what's proper to be showed.—And now, if your honour pleases, the mutton be ready in next room." Ralph instantly, and with very keen inclinations, obeyed the summons, and having dined very heartily, and drank a pint of wine, prepared to commence his circuit; and our Ben being called to attend him, he sallied forth with less curiosity, and rather more experience, than when he had walked with his poor friend Sefton round the ramparts of Portsmouth.

CHAP. XV.

Our hero encounters a very curious adventure during his survey.—Some old friends with the same faces.—Though unfortunate himself, he is still the cause of happiness to others.

I WAS some time pondering in my mind whether I should, or should not, introduce, in this Chapter, a minute description of all the fine things our hero saw during his rounds with honest Benjamin; adverting, at length, to those descriptive powers that have, of late years, been so splendidly displayed by the generality of novel writers, who have scarcely left any thing moveable or immoveable on the face of the earth to describe, I determined to drop the idea, and shall now only, in justice to Ralph's taste and good breeding, observe, that he

admired every thing pointed out to him by his conductor, from the crazy old hulk in the dock-yard to the crazy old castle on Mount Edgecombe; which, had it been placed in a less exalted situation, and surrounded by objects less grand and picturesque, might very justly have been compared to Giant Despair's in the Pilgrim's Progress.

The evening was beginning to set in before our adventurer thought of returning; at length he desired his guide to lead the way back again to the inn; a command which *our Ben* did not obey with great avidity; and, as he was turning the corner of a narrow street, disappeared so very suddenly, that had our hero been superstitious he would have supposed some devil had sunk with him under ground, or a witch carried him off on her broomstick. To say the truth, this worthy lad, not having been much accustomed to the indulgence of evening rambles, and Reybridge having moreover supplied him with

a small advance of cash, had taken the opportunity, whilst our youth was examining the dock-yard, of retiring to an adjacent ale-house, from which the hospitable publican dismissed him with so liberal a memorandum of the goodness of his liquor that, by the time he had got to the corner we have before mentioned, he was unable to support himself longer upon his legs, and a night-cellar being very conveniently open for his reception, he was in such haste to descend, that he forgot to make use of the ladder placed there for that purpose.

Our hero was much distressed by this accident, for he was completely ignorant of the part of the town he was in, having trusted entirely to his guide. His dilemma was increased by the approach of night, and as a crowd of sailors and their doxies now pressed upon him on every side, he was almost stunned by their frantic revelry. The first person Ralph ventured to apply to, to show him the way to *the*

Angel, asked him, if it was the devil he meant, if so, that he was going right enough; for, says he, "That way leads to the gallows, my lad, and that's your half-way *house*."—"The Angel," cries another, "which d'ye mean? Molly Bundle or Sall Swab? they both go by that name."—"Don't mind that impudent fellow," interrupted a very pretty girl, "but follow me, young man, and I'll show you to the inn you want," taking hold of his arm with great cordiality. Though our hero very shrewdly suspected the character of his fair conductor, he was too anxious to get to his lodgings to make any objections to her obliging offer; they therefore proceeded through several blind alleys, till they arrived at a long street that seemed to lead to the water's side, and in the middle of which, and at the entrance of a shabby-looking house, a press-gang was stationed. Ralph's companion no sooner perceived this apparition than, tearing herself from his arm, "Oh!

J——s!" exclaimed she, "if that d——d press-gang han't a laid hold o' poor Joe, never trust me! Poor Sally! she'll never outlive this, I be sure!" Then, darting into the thickest of the gang, our hero, actuated by a sudden impulse of humanity, followed; but was instantly surrounded, secured, and would have been carried off in triumph, had not the lieutenant of the party, who, by the light of the moon, which was now shining bright, recognized his features; nor had Ralph forgotten his old Portsmouth acquaintance, Bampton, who had assisted in playing him that facetious trick the reader will recollect. Far, however, from feeling any remains of anger, he only remembered him as the friend of his beloved Sefton, and approaching, saluted him very cordially. The young officer, who was neither deficient in politeness nor good nature, returned the salutation with interest, and giving a certain sign to his gang, which they perfectly understood, Reybridge was imme-

diately released with three cheers, and followed the lieutenant, at his invitation, into the house before which his men were stationed. On entering a very dirty room Bampton began; "You find me," said he, "Mr. Reybridge, engaged on a very unpleasant service, but duty must be carried on. I am sorry that you have met with such disrespectful treatment from my sailors, but as they saw you walking with the young woman that ran into this house, and whither you attempted to follow her, you must own they stand, in some degree, excused."—"However, Mr. Bampton," replied Ralph, "I do assure you I am totally unacquainted with the woman you mention. She voluntarily offered to show me the way to the Angel Inn, the place where I lodge; and in this kind office she was employed when she left me so abruptly." Here the lieutenant could contain his gravity no longer, but bursting into a fit of laughter, "Upon my soul! Reybridge," cried he, "you must excuse

me, but she has been leading you a way as opposite to the inn you mention as one Pole to the other; for what purpose, she best can tell. All I know of the damsel in question is, that she resides with the woman of this house as her niece, and would not, I take it, prove insensible to the addresses of so gallant a youth as you have, doubtless, appeared in her eyes. I see, my friend, you have not yet been sufficiently drilled in the tricks of the town. I do assure you the Portsmouth business, which so much offended you, was meant in good part, and only to put you upon your guard against future impositions. But, adso, Reybridge, now I think on't, you quitted England at the same time with Tom Sefton! how did you leave your friend! He was as fine a lad as ever breathed." Here Ralph interrupted the lieutenant, and told him that, if he could get rid of what business he had in hand, and would come and partake of a bottle of wine with him at the Angel, he had some

things to relate that would surprize him. "If that's all," replied Bampton, "I'll have it over in a crack." So saying, he made a signal to the leaders of his gang from the window, who instantly rushed into the house, and followed their lieutenant up stairs. Almost immediately our hero's ears were assailed with a most piteous lamentation of women and children, in the midst of which issued, in far hoarser tones, the following consolatory address: "Avast, Sall; never take on so, my girl. A sailor was born for all weathers, as the song says; I baint a-going so far from thee now as last time, and an't I left more rhino than afore, for thee and the young ones? Howsomever, I can't say but how it be a little hard to be driven out to sea again, just as I was getting under snug sail to safe moorings in thy arms, Sall." Our hero was struck with this exclamation from a voice he was confident he had heard before, and hastily inquired of one of the sailors, who was standing at the

street door, if he knew the man above that the lieutenant had pressed? "Know un?" replied Jack, "aye, aye, Sir, I do know un well enough, and as tight a seaman he is, too, as ever stood to a gun, or weathered a gale. Many a time and oft have honest Grappling and I spliced the main-brace together!—Poor Joe!—Why I'll tellee, Sir, how the matter stands: He is but just returned from the Eastern Indies, and had hardly been, d'ye see, three hours ashore after a long and dangerous passage from China, and thought to have cast his anchor here for a little while with his wife and children, when we was obliged to nab him for the Spitfire frigate, that sails in two days on a cruise."—"And pray tell me, my lad," interrupted Reybridge, "did'nt this Joe Grappling go to Madras about a year and a half ago in the Phœnix Indiaman?"—"Iz sure, Sir," replied the sailor, "Captain Daventry commander." Ralph, without speaking another word, instantly darted up stairs, where he beheld

a very affecting scene. Honest Grappling (alias *Neptune,* for it was the watery god himself) was trying to separate himself from his wife and two fine boys, who were clinging round him; whilst the fair niece, we have before mentioned, stood sobbing in a corner, and the lieutenant and his men were standing aloof, unwilling to interrupt the painful parting. At the sight of Ralph, however, Joe sprung from their embrace, and encircling our hero in his arms, "Here, Sall," cried he, "this is the worthy young gentleman that saved me from disgrace aboard the Phœnix! Od's heart I be main glad to see thee again; and if so be I am to have thee for my commanding officer, may my next quid be my poison if I don't go with thee, and stick by thee as long as I can sheet home a top-sail, or handle a marline-spike." An explanation now took place, and Bampton, who was really a humane man, was so much pleased with a recital of the adventures of the Phœnix, that he could

not withstand the strong solicitations of our hero to let honest Joe have his liberty this time; and which was actually offered to him, provided he kept himself snug till the Spitfire sailed. But this indulgence the brave tar refused. "No, your honour," said he, "though I be alike obliged to you and Mr. Reybridge, who I do verily believe to be 'the sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,' as the song goes, it shall never be said that Joe Grappling skulked under his wife's petticoats, whilst his services were wanting, d'ye see, to help the enemy to a good drubbing. If I'd a bin let alone, why I do confess I should have had no objection to have rode at anchor a little for a month or so, but as you have called me again to quarters, I'm not the man to flinch from my duty. Sall knows I love her, but she ought to know I loves my honour better, and therefore my king; for it's in his keeping."—"Nevertheless, Joe," replied the generous lieutenant, "I shall not take

you this time, but shall report what you have said to Captain Cobham. You are not afraid to trust me with the charge of your honour, are you?"—" No Sir, no," rejoined Grappling, " you are to do as you thinks fit, lieutenant; only remember the Spitfire shall have me without pressing as soon as she do please."

Bampton now took our hero aside, and told him it was not his intention to press honest Grappling, after what had happened, at all. " Captain Cobham, with whom I have pretty strong influence," continued he, " is now on shore, and if you will stay only a quarter of an hour where you are, I will go and settle the business, and then return and accompany you to the Angel to supper." This matter being arranged, the lieutenant departed with his gang, who all shook Grappling very cordially by the hand; and then Ralph returning to his old shipmate informed him, that it was Mr. Bampton's intention to report his conduct to the cap-

tain of the frigate, together with the circumstances of his case; and that there could be no doubt of his being released from the present cruize. "Well, mayhap it may be so, your honour," replied Joe, "but if it baint, why I'm the man, as I said afore, that never flinches."—"Aye, that a is," interrupted Sally, "and I shall bless your sweet face a thousand times for this second good service you a done un." "And so shall I too!" added our hero's fair companion, "for I never seed such a hansume young man in all my life." This assertion was accompanied with so many amorous smiles and glances, that Grappling, for the honour of his wife's relation, thought proper to interfere. "Come, come, Bet; none of your palavering," cried he, "d——e you are always for crowding sail and running before the wind without minding your helm, d'ye see. By and bye we shall have thee come bump ashore, and left to lie like a log on the water."—"I doesn't understand all this sea jargon;"

replied Bet: "if you have any thing to say to me, Mr. Grappling, sure you can speak English, can't you?"—"Well, then," replied Joe, "in plain English, Mrs. Betty, the thing is this here; if you continues d'ye see, to throw out your Siren signals at every frigate you meet, and to hurry on before the gale of passion, without minding the *compass*, you'll be picked up, some of these days, by a pirate that will first plunder you, and then turn you adrift without a rag of sail to——" Here Mrs. Betty (not being at all more enlightened by this explanation,) thought proper to interrupt, and in very good time, Joe's eloquence, by a very warm rebuke; and as Mrs. Grappling seemed inclined to take up the cudgels in her niece's defence, we cannot possibly say how far the contention might have gone, had not Mr. Bampton suddenly returned; much to Betty's mortification, and Ralph's relief, who began to be surprizingly alarmed at certain emotions occasioned by the ogles, of this young

lady, and which it is probable (had the parties been alone) would have fought a pretty stout battle with all Mr. Denham's deeply-seated principles; nay, perhaps, have vanquished them too; for the devil is never so successful as when couched beneath a pair of black eyes.

The two friends now took a hearty leave of honest Grappling, on whom our hero forced six guineas to buy baby clothes for the next little one, (for Joe had told him there was one *upon the stocks)* and departed midst the prayers and blessings of the whole family.

On their arrival at the Angel the landlord (though he was a little fuddled) expressed great satisfaction at seeing Ralph. "I thought," said he, "as how we had lost e, Sir; for *our Ben,* who han't been in long, says you vanished from un, as one may say, like a ghost; and he couldn't find e no where."—"Faith, landlord," replied Reybridge, "I can safely return that compliment; for I assure you I was in a

similar predicament in regard to him."—"From what I can learn of the matter," rejoined Bampton, "*our Ben* must have been somewhat groggy, and fell into a night-cellar."—"If I'd thought that," resumed mine host, hickupping, "I'd a larroped un as tightly as e'er a was larroped in his life; for, of all sins under the sun, sotting is the worst." At this remark, Reybridge and the lieutenant laughed very heartily, and then asked him what they could have for supper. Mine host, (who well knew he could play off none of Bonniface's tricks upon Mr. Bampton,) frankly told the contents of his larder, and a roast fowl and egg-sauce, with some scolloped oysters, were ordered to be got ready without loss of time.

During this comfortable meal, our hero made his friend acquainted with all his adventures, from their abrupt separation at Portsmouth, down to the present period, and with which Bampton was greatly surprized. He expressed the sincerest

regret at the untimely fate of poor Sefton, and cautioned our hero not to disclose it too abruptly to the fond parents; who, he was sorry to observe, had been entertaining rather too sanguine hopes about him since his departure. "Poor Tom!" concluded he, "'twas for his *honour*, certainly, he entered into the army; but I never thought him formed for a soldier. Ambition is our bane, Reybridge, after all. I don't know that real happiness can breathe in the same atmosphere with it! Yet the tempter is so splendidly decorated with titles, honours, praises, privileges, riches, and luxuries, that we have not resolution enough to turn from the pageantry, though we see thousands blinded by the glare every day!"

After prolonging the conversation to a late hour, the gentlemen took a friendly leave of each other, with reciprocal promises to renew their correspondence when opportunity offered. Reybridge now retired to rest; or rather to the bed destined

to afford that requisite refreshment, but, out of which Susan the chamber-maid had unhappily forgotten to dislodge some scores of bugs; in consequence of which oversight, poor Ralph was doomed all night to undergo a second supper; but it was like Polonius's, "not where he was to eat, but where he was to be eaten." Notwithstanding the ravages however made upon him by these epicures, he, towards morning, began to doze, and had just fallen into a sweet sleep, when the trusty ostler who had been ordered to call him when the Exeter coach was ready, bolted into the room with a lantern in his hand, and vociferated the intelligence in a tone that would have drowned the blast of a bugle-horn.

CHAP. XVI.

Characters in a Stage Coach.

I CAN no otherwise account for the predilection which the great Smollet, and still greater Fielding, entertained for showing mankind off in stage coaches than, that it afforded them the best opportunities, consistently with nature and probability, of bringing together a humorous diversity of character. Indeed, it is scarcely possible, under any other circumstances, to introduce to each other lords, quacks, strollers, vallets, sharpers, and quakers, and where each shall be compelled to join in easy conversation! But thus introduced, and with the supposition that they shall never fall in with one another again, they give free scope to the power of fiction; personate whatever characters, and maintain

whatever opinions they please. On these occasions therefore, how much of the juggle and mummery of this busy scene of life is sometimes laid open! for most people, in the society of their friends, are on their guard; and, indeed, how few are there whose interests do not point out to them the expediency of closeness and caution. Such is the general distrust we have of one another, so capricious, and so volatile are our dispositions; that the reasonable and virtuous impulse which would, on many occasions, direct our conduct, is checked by prudential considerations, and truth is scarcely to be distinguished, amidst the niceties, ambiguities, quibbles and quirks that shroud her fair form.

Now, in a stage coach, this caution is, nine times out of ten, unnecessary; and that man who for many months I will entertain and converse with; and of whose integrity I shall have no doubt, shall be proved a villain by the sentiments he will unguardedly deliver before strangers dur-

ing a journey in a stage coach from London to York. Some cases, however, occur, in which it is necessary to *put on*, as well as put off the mask in these vehicles, and which will, perhaps, sooner or later in these pages, be proved.

It was so dark when Reybridge took his seat in the coach that was to carry him to Exeter, that he could not perceive the faces of his fellow-passengers, though he observed that the stage was full. As the morning, however, began to break in upon them, a reciprocal observation of each other was followed up by a general salutation. In the seat opposite to our hero, a gentleman, who had the appearance of being a clergyman, sat erect, with his hands upon his cane, between two persons dressed in the jockey style, in green with silk handkerchiefs about their necks; and Ralph, who had bespoke the first place in the coach, was seated by a very handsome and genteel figure of a man, whose countenance however was marked by some lines

of character which none but experienced physiognomists are capable of decyphering.

After a silence of about a quarter of an hour, one of the gentlemen in green began the conversation. "Really," observed he, "this is a most enchanting morning, and calls to my remembrance that beautiful *triplet* of what-d'ye-call-un's,

> "The *toonful* morn, and breathing spring,
> Invite the *smiling* birds to sing!"

"Don't you recollect it, Struttle?" addressing his companion.—"Why, not immediately," replied the other. "You know, I have little time to read poetry; and have not even perused your last collection, Mr. Meteor. I'm told, however, it has had an amazing sale!"—"Why, pretty well." Returned the poet. "The sonnets addressed to the Bishop of D——, and the heroic acrostic on the Heavenly Bodies have been wonderfully admired; but certainly, the complimentary verses on your great

performance of Richard sold the book. Apropos, when did you see the Duke of L—— ? Do you have your *privates* this year?"—"No, faith;" replies the actor, "his grace finds it too expensive, and you know I can't make it worth my while to attend, under a great price. However, I think we may coax him to have your new tragedy of *Cincinnatus* performed at —— if I can but prevail upon Lady Betty to take a part. I have got a promise from W. —— to paint a new scene for the Plough."—"Indeed!" rejoined the other, "well; and why can't it be done?" "Why," answered the actor, "you must know that the duke whispered me, the other day,—but, I'll tell you another time." Here the gentleman on Ralph's right hand interfered. "Pray, Sir;" said he, addressing the poet. "what may be your opinion of Pope as a first-rate bard? Do you think him comparable to Dryden?"—"A, a, who, Sir?" replied the other rather embarrassed by the suddenness of this ap-

plication; "*The Pope*, did you say? No doubt, Sir, the Pope must have—that is," "I mean Mr. Pope, the poet, Sir," interrupted the gentleman, "not,"—"Oh! true, true, Sir," replied the bard, "Why, Sir, to say the truth, I should think Mr. Pope, take him all together;—pray, Sir, what is your opinion?"—"Why, Sir," continued the gentleman, "I am decidedly of opinion that Dryden is infinitely preferable. He has more vigour of imagination, more strength of expression. 'Tis true, his rhymes are not always so correct, or his versification so smooth; but then, what energy of thought, what sublimity of conception!"—"Amazing! indeed, Sir," replied the other, "I am entirely of your way of thinking. Dryden was certainly a great, a prodigious great poet!"—"Great, Sir;" exclaimed the gentleman, "he is above praise. For instance, can any thing exceed the exquisite humour of the *Dunciad?*" "Oh! nothing, nothing." Replied our poet. "I was just going to name that,

as, in my opinion, one of his finest productions."—"Or what do you say to his Rape of the Lock? his *Hudibras!* and his *Tale of a Tub?*" continued the enthusiast. "Did Pope ever arrive at greatness like this?"—"Never, Sir;" returned the acquiescing son of Pindar. "It is long, indeed, since I read the *Hudribras* of Dryden, but there are parts of it, superior, in my mind, to Shakspeare himself." Here our hero could contain himself no longer, but burst into so violent a fit of laughter that the poor poet began to look a little sheepish, and turned his eyes towards the actor as if to demand an explanation; but as the son of the sock seemed neither able nor willing to give it, the laugh was communicated even to the churchman, and continued till the subject was resumed by the bard. "I perceive, gentlemen;" said he, "that I have been running into some trifling error here, but the fact, that I——that—a—a—a—" "That you know nothing at all about the matter, Mr. Poet;"

interrupted Ralph's neighbour; "and are, to do you justice, one of the most ignorant and impudent usurpers of the title I ever met with, greatly as they abound." Both gentlemen in green were somewhat astonished at this observation; the accused, however, pretended not to hear the last words, the force of which he endeavoured to break by a sudden fit of coughing. Upon this, our interrogator turned to the actor, with an intention to ask some questions in *his* department; but this prudent personage, for reasons well known to himself, had suddenly fallen into a deep sleep. An example which was immediately followed by his illustrious companion, leaving the inquisitor to renew his comments upon modern poets as he might think proper.

On the coachman stopping to change horses at Ivy-Bridge, a new scene presented itself. At the inn-door were standing two young gentlemen, who, by their dress, appeared to be men of fashion. On the

door being opened, they came forward, and one of them taking hold of our poet, and the other of our actor, by the collar, pulled them out of the coach with very little ceremony. "Why, you scoundrels!" exclaimed the tallest of the gentlemen: "what made you stay so long? Here have I and Sir Harry been obliged to wait at this d——d inn, rascals, this half-hour for you! Where did you leave Mr. Struttle and Mr. Meteor?"—"They are riding on, *my lord*," replied one of the *grooms*, (for grooms they really were) and will be at L—— House in good time, I dare assure your lordship."—"You dare assure me, you son of a b——h!" exclaimed the lord, "Go, get four fresh horses put to the carriage instantly!"

Our hero's fellow-travellers did not testify so much astonishment at this sudden metamorphosis, as the youth himself, who was indeed struck motionless with surprize. He, however, followed his conductor to the room in which breakfast was prepared,

and here the gentleman, who had sat next him in the coach, began to question the landlord concerning the nobleman and his friend. "Why, one of the gentlemen, Sir," replied mine host, "be my Lord H——, and t'other on um, Sir Harry Havoc. They have both estates hereabouts, and some time agone my lord furbished up a sort of play-house; a *thatre* I think they calls it, where they acts about this time every year *private thatricals.* The first play be to-night, and I be told that there be a great number of gentry-folk a-coming from *Lunnun* to see it."—"And pray, landlord," continued the other "who are these gentlemen his lordship mentioned; Mr. Struttle, and Mr. Meteor?" "Why, Sir," replied the landlord, "as far as I can tell, one on un be a poet that writes *tragadays* and the other thingumbobs for the 'casion, and t'other be a Mr. Struttle, a famous actor-man from town." "And the two heroes in green," continued the gentleman, "are, I presume, the

huntsman and whipper-in of the noble lord?"—"Why, Sir," replied the other "you baint far from the mark. You have only mistook their occupation. One be Sir Harry's groom; and t'other my lord's. And two of the impudents dogs in Christendom they be. Do you know, Sir, they have their private *thatricals* too in the stables and cow house. I was invited to one, once, because our Sall took Lady Betty D——'s part; and there for to hear um mimic the great folk! Lord, Lord, I thought my good woman and I shud a split our sides wi' laughing!" At this moment the fellow who had assumed the character of the poet going past the window, our satirical gentleman (whom we shall distinguish hereafter by the name of Gullum,) requested the landlord to call him in. He accordingly made his appearance; and, without betraying the least confusion, desired to know who wanted him. "I took the liberty of sending for you, my friend" said Mr. Gullum "to

ask a few questions. Will you condescend to answer them?" "Willingly, Sir," replied the fellow, "provided you use expedition."—"How comes it then, Sir," continued the other, "that though no poet, (which has been clearly proved), you have presumed to infringe upon the greatest *licence* of one?"—"By lying; I suppose you mean, Sir?" returned the groom; "why, Sir, vanity; vanity ruins us all, you must know, Sir, that myself, and my partner in the stables, were formerly in much more honourable and lucrative employments. We were no less than valets and pimps to the Viscount G——; in which latter capacity we officiated time and time about; but happening, both of us, to fail in our *speculations* that way; (not much to the benefit either of his lordship's purse or constitution), we were dismissed with ignominy, and fain, for want of something to eat, to descend to the curry-comb. Our present masters wanted careful grooms, and my partner

and I soon convinced them that we had good horse-flesh experience. Thus humbled, we have been obliged to submit to many indignities; but, to make amends, we are allowed to *trade* a little at Newmarket during the races, and as the mysteries of the turf are not unknown to us, contrive to pick up a few guineas in the course of the season."—" But prithee, honest friend," demanded Gullum, " how have you contrived to pick up such an elegant flow of language withal?"—" Sir," returned the other, " I was brought up in a great family, and in the society of my lord's gentleman, and my lady's maid, soon gained, by heart, all those little elegant smatterings of speech which invariably descend from the drawing-room and bed-chamber, to the servants'-hall; till, by degrees, I found myself as capable of harmonizing my periods, without understanding a word of grammar, as they themselves; and, though I cannot, at this moment, write my name, I will dictate a challenge,

or a love-letter with any lord of the land."

"Well, but admitting all this;" replied Mr. Gullum "what could have been your motive for personating characters you could not support? and where the devil did you ever hear of Cincinnatus: and how came you to think of acrostics or heavenly bodies, dedicated to a bishop?"

"Why, Sir," answered the groom, "the fact is; my comrade Jemmy, and I, gained all this knowledge from a paper of memorandums that fell from the pocket of the real poet, Mr. Meteor, as he was mounting his horse. Here it is, Sir," continued he, (pulling a small paper from his pocket) "but I cannot think of parting with it for less than a crown, which I really think it is worth. As for the little consequence we attempted to enjoy in the coach, Jem and I thought it was fair enough in a stage; but you were too sly for us, Sir."

"Well," replied Mr. Gullum, receiving the paper, and presenting five shillings, "I will be the purchaser of this curious

fragment, as I have some notion we may meet the owner of it on the road."—"Not unlikely, Sir," observed the other, "For, between ourselves, both the poet and the player have past by since our first halting here. They are bound to L—— House to be present on the first theatrical performance, there, this season; and you'll certainly overtake them."

The adventurer being now dismissed, the bill was called for, during the settling of which my lord's carriage and four drove up to the door, and presently set off with his lordship and his friend; but not before each had showered upon the head of the obsequious landlord, who stood bowing at the inn-door, a volley of damns and curses for the execrable breakfast he had compelled them to swallow, and the rascally price he had made them pay for it.

CHAP. XVII.

Characters in the Stage Coach continued.—Modern improvements of Poetry, and the Drama.—Shakspeare and Nature yield to Raw Head and Bloody Bones.

MR. GULLUM, the clergyman, and Reybridge now continued their journey to Exeter. The latter was so much astonished at all he had heard and seen, that his curiosity got the better of his accustomed diffidence, and, ere the coach had proceeded a mile, he broke out into the following exclamation.

Surely these servants are not so much to blame for aping and ridiculing their superiors, when it is considered how publicly their superiors, imitate them! Had I been left to judge, from the conversation of Lord H—— and his groom, of the

merits of each as a gentleman, I should, without hesitation have decided in favour of the latter, and yet, it is but fair to conclude that each was imitating the manners of the other; and that the oaths and execrations of his lordship were as much the property of the stables, as the flippant, tho' easy impertinence of the groom belonged to the drawing-room. How much, soever, therefore, the servant may deserve punishment for his presumption, the master certainly merits severer reprehension for his deplorable meanness; nor is a common groom, assuming to himself the importance, and mimicing the fashionable follies of my lord, half so disgusting a caricature as my lord, when he descends to the oaths and obscenity of his common groom.—Good God! how does this happen?

"It is easily to be accounted for," replied Mr. Gullum. "These twigs of quality, when they are children, receive litte or no benefit from the gradual in-

struction of their masters, because it is unaccompanied with the severity of reproof, and rendered irksome to them by two much indulgence in pleasurable pursuits. The noble parents, ridiculously vain of their only son, take care to inculcate in in his mind, before it is capable of reasoning, a due sense of his dignity and importance; and, on this account, he is prohibited from associating with *humble*, however respectable, families. Thus restricted, and as his little lordship cannot assert his consequence before his father and mother; and be called by the delightful appellation of "my lord" by them; why he flies to the servants'-hall, and there the seeds of his degeneracy are first sown. From his father's gentleman he learns to be a liar and a coxcomb; from his mother's gentlewoman, backbiting, impertinence and affectation. From the lower servants he picks up a little knowledge of gambling by sometimes making one with them at put and cribbage, and

the finishing stroke is reserved for the grooms and stable boys, who initiate him in all the mysteries of swearing, obscenity, and cruelty! What, then, can be expected from a man whose youth has been thus deplorably sacrificed? What is the height of his ambition, when he is arrived at that period of life when he should support the dignity of his family by serving his king and country as a great soldier, or a great legislator? Why, to win the sweepstakes at Newmarket, broach the best wine, hunt the best dogs, or be cast in damages for *crim. con.*!"—"Good heaven!" cried our hero, "is this possible? Can you be serious, Sir?"—Here Mr. Gullum regarded Ralph, for the first time, with more than common attention. "You have never resided much in London, Sir," replied he, "I presume?"—"No, Sir," returned Ralph, "I have only occasionally visited London."—"One may tell," observed the clergyman, who had not yet opened his lips, "by the roses on

your cheeks, young gentleman, that you have not lived much in the smother and smoke of the town, and, after all, I don't know whether a country life *baint* the best of the two. I know it is the cheapest; for when one lives in town, why one must go to the theatres, sometimes, and that always runs away with a d——d whacking sum of money in the course of the year."

Reybridge's sensations of astonishment were not greatly removed by the conclusion of our reverend gentleman's harangue; he, however, took no further notice than by casting a side glance at Gullum, on whose countenance sat a smile infinitely beyond his, (though possibly not the parson's) comprehension. A short pause now succeeded, which was broken by Mr. Gullum's recollecting the paper of memorandums he had purchased from the enterprising groom of Lord H———:" "Egad," cried he, pulling it from his waistcoat pocket "this will afford us recreation till we get to Exeter, at all

events." The paper, which was none of the cleanest, was then unfolded, and contained the following memorandums.

Mems. Private The——l.

Aristotle, Horace, Boileau—A fig for the critics.—Pruning-knife.—Cincinnatus Trag. 5 acts.—Remember oxen for the plough.—Alive, if possible.—New scenes by W——.---Lady L. and Sir Harry Q. —Had the Roman oxen long or short horns?—Mem.—If J—n could make them moo, and lash their tails, it would have a fine natural effect.—Catiline's conspiracy.—*Kuown*, Greek for a dog: good name for my *snarling* philosopher.--- Homer only blind of *one eye*.---Tagandra to come in at the conclusion of the fight. —Better without her wig.—I hate a green cloth in a wood.—Why not J—n make some grass for 'em to die on.—Introduce acrostic on the Georgium Sidus, dedicated to the Bishop of ———, in the last act.—Heavenly bodies to join in cho-

rus.—Remember Panden's pun, caught from the stars.—Better to give up the ghost.—Look out in Johnson for *hard* words.—Not too much nature looks like art."

This *rudis indigestaque moles* afforded infinite diversion to the company in the coach, and Gullum was beginning his comments thereon, when he was interrupted by the sudden stoppage of the coach, and presently two gentlemen on horseback riding up, inquired of the coachman if there was any room in the inside? Being answered that there was just room for two more, they dismounted, and leaving their horses to the care of one servant, took the two places that had been vacated by the two knights in green.

Gullum, who, whatever were his other qualifications, was certainly not deficient in penetration, soon decided in his own mind, from the external appearance of the two strangers, that they could only be the

actor and the poet of whom we have before made such honourable mention. He was, indeed, confirmed in this opinion by the following observation from one of them.—" By G—d! it is very strange that your horse, *mon ami*, should fall lame, so suddenly! Why don't you get a better Pegasus, Poet?" To this remonstrance, the other answered only with a " Pish!" and immediately put on an air of great consequence, not unmixed with contempt, as he viewed his fellow-passengers. After a few moments pause, Gullum, who anticipated much fun from these originals, renewed the discourse. " What, Sir;" observed he, addressing him that seemed to be the actor; " has your friend's horse fallen lame? That is, doubtless, an unpleasant accident if you are going any length of way."—" Fortunately, however, Sir," replied the actor, " that is not our case; though we shall have to walk about a mile across the park, shan't we Poet?"—" The Park!" ex-

claimed Gullum with affected surprize; "perhaps then, Sir, you are bound to L—— House? I understand there is a theatrical representation to-night, to which the principal families of Plymouth, Exmouth, Dartmouth and Teignmouth, have been invited. In short, Sir, not to be put down for a confirmed punster, I hear that all the *mouths* in Devonshire are to be opened on the occasion!" "Bless me!" replied the Poet, "you surprize me, Sir, extremely. I had no idea it was to be so general a thing! We are going thither, it is true, but Lord L—— told me last night, that only a few private families from the neighbourhood of Exeter had been asked; besides the usual visitors from the metropolis!"—"That may be, Sir," resumed Gullum, "but as Virgil says, '*Fama volet*,' and I was told this morning, that as a poet and actor of great and deserved celebrity were to give their assistance at the performance, his lordship

had found it impossible to refuse the solicitations of his numerous friends, for a freer circulation of tickets on the occasion."

At this information, the bard's eyes began to sparkle, and the actor erected his crest, to mumble some quotations from Shakspeare. "Pray, Sir;" at length asked the poet, "are you acquainted with any of my ——— I say, Sir, did you ever happen to peruse any of this author's works?"—"If it is the same person I mean, Sir," replied Gullum, with a most provoking gravity "I am ashamed to confess I never have: but what signifies that; all the world has read the productions of the great Meteor, nor should I have been excluded from that satisfaction, but by unforeseen accidents. However, though I have never been fortunate enough to peruse the ebullitions of his muse, I have heard enough of his style to make me conclude him a bard

of so much profundity; that he would be as difficult to understand as old Donne or any other metaphysical poet of his time. Nevertheless, it will not be denied, I believe, that with all the learning and fancy of Cowley, he unites the strength of Dryden, and the elegance of Pope in some of his productions."—"Why, Sir;" replied the poet with a smile of ineffable importance, "it is not impossible but that—I say, Sir, wonders have never, yet, ceased in this world, and why should they, now? As to Mr. Meteor's having the strength of Dryden or the elegance of Pope it is probable that these aids, unassisted by his own original style, would be insufficient to do justice to the *vastness* of some of his conceptions! As to old Donne and Cowley, it must be confessed that they abound in superb ideas, which I have heard many stupid people term conceits; but in fact, they only wanted amplification! Our language was, then,

as Dr. Johnson observes, in a state of absolute 'penury,' and the poets' thoughts, for want of words to do them justice by illustration, were as badly off as the deities of Egypt which became more numerous than their worshippers. But what shall we say of the poets, with very few exceptions, of the present day, who to equal, if not superior originality of conception, join the richest and most copious embellishments of language? The poets of the present day are truly the sons of Pindar. They mount! they fly! Show me one that permits his wings to flutter feebly over a stale distich of ten syllables, and then winds up with that lumbering expedient of Dryden's, an Alexandrine! No, Sir, the *wildness* of our present metre beats the Alexander's feast, hollow. What have we in the annals of English poetry that can be put in competition to the rhapsodies of a ———, or the sonnets and midnight musings of an *Anna Della* and a *Della Donna*?"—"I perceive, Sir,"

replied Gullum, "that I can be only talking to a proficient in the sublime art; and, if my better genius does not mislead me, that proficient can be no other than the celebrated Mr. Meteor himself!"—"Indeed, Sir;" replied the bard, highly elated, "I cannot but admire the acuteness of your penetration. I confess I am that Meteor; and, since I have had the honour of being discovered by a gentleman of your merit, allow me to observe, in addition to what I have already remarked, that as the poetry of the ancients—"Here the actor's patience was quite exhausted. "Psha!" interrupted he, "what signifies bothering us about poetry, now?"—"What signifies it!" exclaimed Meteor in a rage! "I'm astonished Mr. Struttle to hear you! What signifies it? You are the last man, Sir, whom I should have suspected of speaking so contemptuously of the bards of the present day! to whom, you'll pardon me, you owe all your present consequence in society. So

puny was the reputation of an author formerly, I grant, that he was glad to court the actor to play for him; but now the tables are turned Mr. Struttle. No longer restricted to the jog trot of the old beldam Nature, the genius of the author has its full expansion! and you actors know not the power you possess of the wonderful and sublime, till the poet calls them forth! No, no, Sir; much as your acting is to be admired, you must confess that you derive all your nerve and vigour from the conceptions of the author!"—"Pardon me, Mr. Meteor," replied the actor, with the greatest *sang froid*," "if I differ with you *in toto!* I cannot allow that we are in the least degree indebted to you for the support we receive from the public. I agree, however, that you are of some assistance to the carpenter and mechanist of the theatre, for whom, it must be confessed, you find plenty of employment, by the introduction of so many monsters on the

stage; but then again, these industrious gentlemen are no less necessary to you, and if Mr. J—n was not as active with his clay, pasteboard, wires, and paint, as you are with your pen, I fear, neither your sublime writings, or my sublime acting, would meet with an applauding hand. You allege that all my nerve and vigour is derived from the poet! If you mean by nerve and vigour, strutting and ranting, why I confess I have frequently done both, but with the most friendly intention!"—"Indeed!" interrupted the Poet, 'grinning horribly a ghastly smile;' "and pray, Sir, what was that?"—"Why," replied Struttle, "that the audience might not *hear* what I said, to be sure. As for the tables being turned, my good friend, they are turned to be sure; but not exactly as you would insinuate. We are indebted to our dear wavering friend the Public, for their *toleration*, not to you for your writings; which, indeed, when the wind changes, will be suffered to re-

turn from whence they came; 'the realms of Chaos and old Night.'"—Meteor's rage could now no longer be contained, but bubbled in white foam from his lips! At length he sputtered out; "This is mighty fine, by G—d! mighty fine indeed! mighty grateful this usage, Sir, to me, your benefactor, who first introduced you to public notice, when you had not a coat to your back, I say, Sir; nor a clean shirt to put on! Tell me, Mr. Struttle; did you not get a bumper benefit last year in consequence of your success in the character of Phantomad in my new tragedy of the Charnel House?" "Very true, Sir;" replied the actor; but it is also well known that the piece "would have been d—d if it had not been for our mutual friend J—n, who not only paid for the paste board to make the death's heads and cross bones, out of his own pocket, and which would not else have been ready in time, but suggested that admirable alteration which gained so

much applause; of my discovering my scull when I take off my helmet, instead of the old trick of a pale face and a splash of blood upon it:"—"What, Sir! what, Sir!" replied Meteor in an agony of fury, "did your last speech but one gain no applause? Gentlemen," continued he, looking alternately at Gullum, the Clergyman, and our hero, "for my own credit's sake, and to do away the unjust and ungrateful insinuations of this illiberal defamer, I will myself repeat these lines; then judge yourselves whether I am indebted to scene painters and scene shifters!" Thus saying, he put himself in as tragical an attitude as the coach would permit, and in thundering accents recited as follows:

"The bloody sun now 'gins to set!—Arise
Ye hags that bay the moon; round whose bright orb
Millions of shapeless shapes, led on by death,
Glide thro' the dusk *caliginous*, and rouse
The sheeted murder'd from the crumbling tomb!
And see! the yawning grave vomits him up!

It is the king!—Oh! hide those filmy eyes!
Like twin stars blasted by a comet's blaze,
They only shed malignant rays around!
The rattling armour shrinks!—And now—Oh! heavens!
Appears a grinning scull!"

Gullum, who had highly enjoyed this altercation from the beginning, now caught Meteor by the hand and swore he had never heard finer lines in his life. "And," continued he addressing the actor, notwithstanding, Mr. Struttle, what you have advanced, an audience must have been deaf or stupid not to have applauded such a speech, any how, or any where. I must differ with you, too, in many other points. The public, you own, support Mr. Meteor in his writings. And pray, Sir, let me ask you, in this enlightened age, is not the approbation of the public to be preferred to the objections of a few dull mechanical individuals? However Gentlemen, from what I have observed, I am convinced that you are both men of transcendant merit in your several capa-

cities, and I must congratulate myself on my good fortune in having fallen in with you."

Meteor was considerably mollified by this timely remedy to the wounds he had received from his companion. As to that gentleman, he had studied in various green rooms the true meaning of those emphatic words, "*Ex fumo, dare lucem,*" which I choose to translate, "To extract fun from ignorance and infirmity;" or, as the '*Profanum Vulgus*' have it, *to smoke him.* He therefore, judged it the wisest plan to continue silent, and Mr. Gullum resumed the discourse. "You must know, Mr. Meteor," continued he, "that I am myself a bit of a poet, and should be much flattered by your advice and opinion in regard to a new tragedy I have just completed; the subject of which, I am persuaded, is perfectly original. It is *Cincinnatus taken from the Plough!* I have finished entirely the four first acts, and as the last scene is in the fields, I have con-

trived to have an artificial grass-plat *bedect* with daisies and primroses, and here and there, a mole-hill, which will have a beautiful effect. My opening will be wonderfully striking! I have an ox in training for the plough, and Cincinnatus will be discovered musing upon his back above; I mean to have Ceres and her nymphs reclining on a cloud, who are to sing an ode to husbandry. But my conclusion, I think, Mr. Meteor, might not even have disgraced *your* powers of conception. I make my hero die in the beginning of the fifth act, and, in strict conformity to the heathen mythology, introduce him as a *star* in the last scene, to end with a chorus of gratulation by all the heavenly bodies!" If poor Meteor had had before his eyes all the monsters he had ever raised with his poetical quill, he could not have looked more ghastly than at the conclusion of this speech. "Good God! Sir," faultered he, "what the devil are you talking about? And—

hey? Why, Sir, by some d—d means or another, you have got hold of my new tragedy, and would pass it off as your own!"—"*Your* tragedy, Sir," replied Gullum, "pardon me. It has been the labour of the last three years of my life; and, though I admire the lines you have just now repeated, yet in the ode sung by the heavenly bodies in *my* play, there is an acrostic on the *Georgium Sidus* which I will back against any thing you have ever written, and which will as assuredly secure me in the succession of the laureatship, as that I now breathe." This was too much for the poor poet to bear. In the paroxysms of his fury and astonishment, he beat his head against the sides of the coach, and uttered so many dreadful imprecations, that, at the earnest and repeated intreaties of our hero, Gullum explained the matter; and, producing the memoranda, which he relinquished into the trembling hands of poor Meteor, advised

him to be more careful of such precious items in future.

The coach not long after arrived at the entrance of the compound which led to L—— House, and at which place, Messrs. Struttle and Metcor had ordered themselves to be set down. Here, then, this illustrious pair alighted, and took a hasty departure, neither of them over and above delighted with the enthusiastic compliments of the facetious Mr. Gullum.

CHAP. XVIII.

The travellers arrive at Exeter, a curious conversation between Ralph and the landlord of the White Lion.—Modern improvements in music.—The giant Handel is put to flight by Mynheer Van Waltz, and Signior Tamborino del Triangello—Characters in the coach continued.

On the arrival of our travellers at Exeter, they were told that the London coach did not set out till four o'clock in the afternoon; dinner was therefore ordered, and while it was preparing, Reybridge proposed to his fellow-travellers that they should all take a walk. As neither of the two, however, seemed inclined for this recreation, he called the landlord aside, and asked him if he had

any idle person he could spare to shew him a little of the famous old town of Exeter? "Iss sure," Sir, directly," replied mine host.—" Here, Billy!" continued he, bawling from the bottom of the stairs—" what beest at?—Here make haste *woale*?—I do want ye!—Aye master," turning to our hero—" 'tis a famous old town as you do say, sure enough; but you *baint* come at the proper season to see it to the best advantage."—" And pray, landlord," asked Ralph, " when is the proper season?"—" Why, Sir, it begins about *cirkit* time, when the judges do come to hald *size*.—Then we ha' plenty of fun a going forward; plays, balls, concerts, and I don't know what beside."—" And are all your seasons equally pleasant, friend?" asked our hero. " Why, your honour," replied Boniface " that depends upon the business at *size*. Sometimes we be rather duller than *ornary*, if there *baint* many prisoners to try for capital offences; but, if we be fortunate

enow to ha' half a dozen *despert* cases, why there be scarce a bed to be got in the town! ecod, now I thinks on't, I a got a sort of diary of one of our *size* weeks up stairs that was made out by a whimsical gentleman that lodged at our inn, I remember, about five years agone. It have often made my good dame and I laugh, for somehow or another, there's a little touch of waggery about it."—"Will you let me look at it?" asked Reybridge." "That I *woal*, Sir, in a minute," replied the landlord, and going to a small cupboard that stood within the bar, he returned with half a sheet of long paper containing the following memoranda.

Monday.—The Court was opened, and one Grout, an Attorney, tried and convicted of Forgery.—Alderman Garbish gave a grand dinner to the Judges and Counsellors.

Tuesday.—Philip O'Strappum, an Irish grenadier was found guilty of a rape, and sentenced to be hanged. In the evening, an elegant ball was held at the as-

sembly rooms, at which were assembled all the beauties of the county.

Wednesday.—A trumpeter belonging to the — regt. of dragoons was condemned for the murder of his comrade, by knocking out his brains with the butt-end of his trumpet. In the evening, a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music was given to the Dillitanti, by Mr. Counsellor Crotchet, a great amateur.

Thursday.—After a long trial of fourteen hours, a very fine young woman was found guilty of robbing her Mistress, but strongly recommended to mercy, on account of the compunction manifested by her at her trial. At night the celebrated Mrs. T——, made her first appearance at the theatre, in the character of the Fair Penitent.

Friday.—Another woman was convicted of the murder of her bastard child. At night, Mr. K—— made his debut in Don John in the Chances, and was wonderfully great in the baby scene.

Saturday.—Amusements ended with the execution of the condemned criminals, in the morning, and a grand mask'd ball at my lady Frigid's in the evening.

"Really, my friend," observed our youth, returning the paper to the landlord, "it may truly be said by an eminent satirist, that we are 'refining upon luxury,' when we can make even the miseries of our fellow-creatures subservient to our pleasures. I suppose, Sir, you are a principal partaker in these diversions, hey?"—"Why, for the matter of that, Sir," replied our host, "I makes a bit of a holiday, I do confess, with other folk, in my way."—"But," replied Ralph," you would rather hold up your hand at the bar of your own inn, than at that of the court-house, I suppose, landlord?"—"Why, yes, master;" replied Boniface laughing, "I think I would." By this time the lad, who was some years younger than our Ben at Plymouth, was ready to attend our hero in his walk, and they set forward accordingly. Some philosophers in analyzing the human heart, have been puzzled to account for that pleasurable sensation which one rational being too

frequently experiences in beholding the danger, wretchedness, and disgrace of another; whilst, perhaps, he is, at the same time, feeling for the sufferer the most tender compassion. It is a false conclusion which some people draw, that such beholders of misery must necessarily have hard hearts; as I have, myself, seen men of the most exemplary benevolence at a public execution, and witness it with tears in their eyes. That there is an apparent contradiction here, I will not deny; but a little consideration may possibly reconcile it to the understanding. This pleasure, then, arises from that intuitive satisfaction resulting from a consciousness of security, and is felt in the comparison of situations. There are few people in the world that have not their allotted vexations and disappointments, and, the view of a fellow-creature in so much more miserable a condition, will considerably alleviate the burden of their own troubles, however pressing. The

same comparison of situation, and the same pleasure resulting from it holds good with those who take delight in viewing the rope-dancer, who is every instant in danger of breaking his neck; or a dangerous mobbing and fighting in the street, from a window up two pair of stairs:—and it is the same feeling that makes us crowd in ecstacies round a blazing fire at Christmas, with a good meal before us; though the tempest beats against our windows, and the groans of the houseless and miserable may be heard in every pause of the storm.

These indulgencies, however, though they may not be absolutely criminal, are, by no means, innocent; as custom will in time, deaden all compassionate sensations, and a public execution, instead of leaving a solemn impression upon the mind, will only the better prepare it for the elegant diversions of an *assize week*.

On our hero's return from his walk, he repaired to the dinner parlour, where,

besides Mr. Gullum and the clergyman, was an elderly gentleman who had taken the only vacant place in the coach for London. Just as dinner was serving up, a little swarthy man in a scarlet coat and black silk waistcoat and breeches, waddled into the room; and, while the dishes were placing upon the table, took the opportunity of letting the rest of the company know who and what he was. "Coom, coom, vaiters," cried he, "vy was you not make de haste?—By G—t, I shall not be in de time for mine lady B—'s concert, by G—t! there be vaun, two, tree tings of mine own that they play, and by G—t they will not be able to play dem if I am not there."—"A musician, Sir, I presume?" observed Gullum. "Yease, Saer, yease," replied the other;—"I vas once have de honour to be de chief musician to de Emperor of Yarmony, by G—t! but dare vas more of de monies to be got in England, and so I was coom here."—"You have found

the change for the better, I hope?" continued Gullum—"Yease, yease," replied this disciple of Apollo.—"*Now* it be yer vell: but I vas like to get into one d——d scrape by G—t, when first I vas coom here, because, by G—t, I vas teach de English music, and de Yarmon music, and all the goot music dat I could tink off! Poot, de petter de music, by G—t, the vorse it vas vit me:—till I cot no scholar at all. Vell, I met one day vit one old friend that I vas leave in Yarmony as thin as de rat! By G—t, he was grown as fat as putter, vit de goot vains, and de goot meats; because he teach de Italian grace to de English word for de theatre! and so my friend introduce me to de Alderman Cobble's daughter in the (vat you call) Cheap side! and so I teach her to sing the Italian, and de half note, and de trill; and so I vas get de monies."—"And, pray Sir," rejoined Gullum, "how long has this part of the world been honoured with the instructions of so great

an artist?"—"I vas coom here, Saer, to mine lady B—'s concert," answered the German, "but Salisbury vas vere I leeve." —"You practice your profession there, I presume?" returned the other.—"Yease, Saer, yease.—I adapt de fiddle quartello to de English vord; and I compose de valtz, by G—t, and teach de young ladies de tambourine and de triangle, and de goosy gander, and de high diddle d ddle! —Oh, by G—t, since I trow my countryman Mynheer Handle in o de fire—I have got plenty of de monies by G—t."

The company now sat down to dinner, and the little German began a sonata with his knife and fork which he executed with wonderful facility and perseverance. Having stuffed himself to the throat, he called for a tumbler of brandy, into which, to save appearances, he poured about a table spoonful of water, and turning to the company, "you goot to hell, gentlemen's," said he, "dise was my vay, I never drinks till I have

filled my pelly, because mine appetite vas go away." He then finished a potation which would have suffocated nine men out of ten, and calling for the landlord, paid his share of the reckoning, and without saying another word hobbled out of the room to attend his patroness's musical party. A gentleman now arrived at the inn, to whom our little German made many low bows before he resumed his seat upon a meagre looking horse that was waiting for him. The stranger, however, took no further notice of these acts of courtesy, than by slightly touching his hat, and then walked on and entered the room where our travellers were seated. After mutual salutations, and the gentleman having agreed to take his share in another bottle of wine, Gullum, who had seen from the window, the little musician's obsequiousness, and the other's contemptuous reception of it, asked him if he knew any thing of that foreigner? "Yes," replied

the stranger, he is a German fiddler, that is growing rich at the expense of two very respectable and excellent musicians, residing at Salisbury, and who have, for these last twenty years, been supporting themselves with great credit in their profession, but are obliged now to quit it; because they cannot bring themselves to prostitute their talents to the monstrous affectation of the present style, to the utter exclusion of all grace, nature, passion, and genius! Because they cannot stoop to teach the boarding school misses to "gargle glib divisions," as a celebrated writer happily terms it, to simple English words, or violate the dignity of the harmonic art by the invention of new notes and new clefs for a penny trumpet, a whistle, or a Jew's harp! to this miserable corruption of true taste is it owing, that we have so many foreigners among us, who, though there may be, here and there, a man of merit, are for the most part, made up of common fiddlers, who, by dint of shrugging,

whining, and grimace, are able to pass off their own fulsome trash as examples of the true pathos, and make a whole drawing-room confess, that it is preferable to the tenderest and most beautiful compositions of a Sacchini or a Pasiello!" —"You are not, then, Sir," interrupted Ralph, "after all, an enemy to Italian music?"—"Far from it, Sir," replied the stranger, "on the contrary; for sentiment and expression, I think it unrivalled! but then, I confess, I like to hear it in its proper place, and performed in the beautiful language, to which it is peculiarly adapted!—But, did the charming composers I have just mentioned, (besides many others) mean that their airs should be squalled in an affected accent, and to the destruction of time and tune, by Miss Higgins, in Carnaby market? Or had they an idea, that a melody set to words in their own language, beautifully and naturally descriptive of sensations of love or joy would ever be lacerated on an Eng-

lish theatre, to the vulgar rhymes of a hunting song.

To this nervous reprobation of our present refinement in music, Gullum, to whom Reybridge looked for some observations, was silent, and, indeed, with prudence; for music was a subject he by no means understood, and it was a maxim with this gentleman, never to risk an exposure of himself, however grateful it was to him to make a laughing stock of others. The stranger, therefore, finding no one inclined to undertake the defence of the worthy German and his brethren of the fiddle-stick, dropped the subject, and soon after retired, leaving our hero, Gullum, the parson, and the old gentleman we before mentioned, to proceeed on their journey to London.

The vehicle to which our travellers were now consigned, was of a more respectable order, than the diligence that had conveyed them from Plymouth; being a carriage for the accommodation of four

only. They had not proceeded far, before the new passenger began a comment upon the scandalous imposition of the times; and that there was no safety against it, either in respect to persons or property. "For my own part," continued he, "I have been so often juggled by what I have seen and heard, that I have almost determined to quit the town altogether, and bury myself entirely in the solitude of my own fields. I am, by nature, extremely sensible to the misfortunes of other people, and am never more happy than when I can contribute to their comfort; but, I have been deceived in every person I have yet befriended. I have advanced money to distressed families, who, instead of pursuing with it the plain and honest path of industry, have lavished it on idle and extravagant speculation. I have placed the daughters of my tenants at boarding-schools, to learn something of the necessary duties of housewifery, in order to qualify them for making sober and

discreet wives, and they have descended, by degrees, from the sentimental novel to the bagnios of Covent Garden. I am now going to London on motives of benevolence! People may call it weakness, but I cannot get the better of it."—"It is a very noble propensity in you, Sir;" replied our hero, "and I see no reason why you should wish to get the better of it. In my humble opinion, it is but a poor excuse, and one is oftener dictated by avarice, than prudence, when a man abstains from general acts of benevolence, because it is probable he may be occasionally liable to imposition! and as it is better that a hundred rogues should escape, than that one innocent man should be punished, so it is better that the charitable should be a hundred times imposed upon, than that one real object of compassion should be abandoned and left to perish."—"Perfectly right, young gentleman;" observed the parson, who now thought it absolutely necessary to open his mouth; "I see

you have a just sense of religion. 'He that giveth unto the poor, lendeth to the Lord!'—and again, according to St. Paul; 'Put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness!'"—"Imposition is, however," replied Gullum, "what the most careful of us are continually exposed to, especially among *the clergy*; and I have known the sacred character made a cover even for vice and profaneness. But this is an evil that can never be remedied, till learning and merit are made the *sole* qualifications for being admitted to sacerdotal duties."—"That is true, Sir," rejoined our hero, "and I have heard a clergyman, a very old and dear friend of mine, say; that it is owing to the abuse of the profession, by allowing men equally destitute of principle and talent to be ordained, that free-thinking has got such a footing among us; for how is it possible indeed that the rising generation should respect religion, when its ministers are to be seen in every riotous company, and en-

tering as gaily into the spirit of a licentious conversation over the bottle, as the wildest rake of the party."

"For my part," observed the benevolent gentleman, "I venerate the clergy. The curate of my village is a man of great worth; but, if I did not allow him thirty pounds a year, in addition to his little income, which is only twenty, it would be impossible for him to support a wife and five children!"—"Surely, Sir," cried Ralph with glistening eyes, "this is truly great and benevolent in you!"—"My duty, only, Sir," replied the old gentleman, "which every good man is bound to perform; and what is more the duty of a christian than to show tenderness to our fellow-creatures?" At this moment one of the linchpins of a hind wheel fa[illegible]ing out, the coachman was obliged t[illegible] halt, and whilst he was fastening it in again, a post-chaise drove by, in which sat an elderly looking man, who, on seeing our benevolent gentleman, ordered the pos-

tillion to stop, and saluted him by the name of Wintertop. The man of benevolence instantly recognizing an old townsman. "Ah! Dr. Chubley!" cried he, "is it you, my friend! Bless me! what returning from London, hey?—then perhaps you can inform me something about my disobedient hussey."—"Why, my old friend," replied the other, "I am concerned to say that your letter forbidding her marriage with young Heartfree, came too late; they were united the day before. But really, my good neighbour, I don't think any harm can come of the match. The young man is sober, industrious, highly accomplished, of an amiable disposition, and the strictest integrity; and, my life on't, with the slightest pecuniary assistance, will bustle through the world extremely well, and make your daughter a tender and affectionate husband."—"I'll tell you what, Doctor," cried the old man, pale with rage; he's an unprincipled villain, and

she's an undutiful slut, and I won't give them a single farthing. What care I for the rascal's integrity, and accomplishments, and such fulsome cant! he hasn't got a sixpenny piece in the world, nor connexions, nor interest of any kind!—No; they shall starve; rot in the streets, before I'll forgive such an outrage!"—"And truly, Mr. Wintertop," replied the Doctor, "I fear this will be the case, unless you can be prevailed upon to extend your forgiveness, for poor Heartfree having generously become security for a dear friend, who would otherwise have been dragged to gaol, though in the last stage of a consumption, must now, I fear, go thither himself."—"Will he be nabbed?" exclaimed old benevolence, rubbing his hands, "I'm glad on't, I'm glad on't.—What, go to prison, hey? Aye, aye; there let him rot, and his wife may follow him for aught I care: the ungrateful baggage will learn, there, what it is to disobey a parent who has been but

too indulgent too her. Come, Doctor, as this is the case, I shall return to Dartmouth, for I have nothing now to do in London."—"But, surely, Sir," returned the good Doctor, "notwithstanding what has passed, you will not leave this unfortunate couple to the misery of a common gaol? They depend upon"——"I can't help their dependence," interrupted old Wintertop, "they brought it upon themselves, and must abide by the consequences of their folly; and so, Doctor, if you and I are to continue friends, take me with you, and so no more about the matter. Here, coachman, here's your fare." So saying, he tossed five shillings into the fellow's hat, and, without farther ceremony, shifted his quarters to the chaise, which, Dr. Chubley, after another ineffectual remonstrance, ordered to drive on.

Reybridge was more confounded by the result of this conversation, than he had ever felt himself before. "God of hea-

ven!" exclaimed he, of what materials can this man's heart be composed? With the sentiments of charity and benevolence in his mouth, he will probably be the murderer of his children!—my blood runs cold at the thought of such monstrous barbarity!—At such execrable hypocrisy! Should he be the death of his daughter, how will he answer for such premeditated cruelty, to the Saviour who will come to judge him?" "He will be d——d to all intents and purposes!" replied the parson. "Unless," observed Gullum, with a sarcastic leer—he should be fortunate enough to have you by him, Doctor, in his last moments, to give him absolution."—"His reverence was about to reply, when the coach suddenly stopped at the door of a public house, at which stood a man, who had very much the appearance of a country attorney, busily reading a newspaper; while two constables were drinking their pot of porter on a bench near him. At this unexpected apparition, the

parson was seized with so violent a fit of trembling, that even Ralph observed his consternation, and inquired if he was unwell. His reverence, instead of making any reply, suddenly drew from his pocket a huge hat and wig, which he placed on his head, hiding his face at the same time under a large cravat which he pulled over, so as to cover his mouth. This arrangement was scarcely completed, when one of the constables approaching and looking into the coach for a few moments, "noa, noa, Mr. Leech, he baint here," cried he "I should know un in a trice, if as how he was here. Here be only two strange faces that I never seed afore, and a poor parson that seems to be fast asleep." "A parson!" echoed he with the newspaper, and rushing forward, "you blockhead! I would examine a parson in preference to a mountebank in such a case! no disguise so plausible as the cassoc; *cucullus non facit monachum!* that's my motto." The worthy limb of

the law proceeded therefore, without further ceremony, to examine our worthy pillar of the church, who stood the test no longer than the removal of his hat and wig; after which, he was handed out of the coach and committed to the charge of the constables without offering to make the least resistance.

On inquiry, it turned out, that this grave personage had made his escape a few days before from the county gaol, whither he had been committed on suspicion of having been guilty of divers forgeries to a great extent, and in consequence whereof, a considerable reward had been offered for apprehending him.

On this catastrophe Reybridge made no comment, but it was easy to perceive he was no less shocked than surprized by the different deceptions that within a few hours, only, had passed under his eye. Gullum, too, continued silent for a considerable time; at length, turning to his fellow traveller, and observing him atten-

tively " I perceive, Sir," said he, " with much concern, that you are of a very ingenuous and unsuspicious disposition. I say concern, because, in the town to which you are, I presume, going, you will be hourly exposed to infinitely more dangerous because more subtle characters than those which have lately left us. I suspected the clerical impostor from the moment I heard him speak, and was pretty well convinced that no clergyman would have made use of such low and vulgar expressions as you will recollect fell from him, however unfit, in other instances, he might have been for the profession." Ralph replied that he very well remembered that circumstance, and then Gullum continued his observations on various subjects, to all which our hero paid great attention, and returned very civil answers. Once, or twice, indeed, his heart began to open to this pleasant new acquaintance, and he was about to impart to him some

particulars of his own interesting situation, but he recollected the wily Bayburn, and caution for the first time, sealed his lips.

CHAP. XIX.

Characters of the stage coach brought to a conclusion.—Our hero still doomed to pay dearly for his experience.—Conduct of a Salisbury inn-keeper.—" Rara avis in terris," &c.—Bad accounts of the Sefton family.—Ralph pursues his journey to the metropolis.

Though Reybridge had sailed from Madras, with fifty guineas in his pocket besides the bill on Mr. M——'s house for two hundred pounds, the worthy inhabitants of St. Helena had taken care, during his stay among them, to reduce that number so considerably, that on examining his finances at Salisbury, where the coach stopped for the night, he found that he had only a guinea, and some loose silver left; a circumstance that surprized

him not a little, till he recollected the present he had so liberally bestowed upon honest Joe Grappling at Plymouth. As he was altogether unused to travelling, and had no idea of the expenses he might incur before his arrival in London, he thought it would be as well to try if he could not get his bill discounted where he was, by these means securing himself from all danger of being hard pressed. On a business of this kind, he saw no danger of consulting his fellow traveller, who having examined the bill, and finding it was payable "to Mr. Ralph Reybridge or *his order*," advised him by all means to get it discounted, if it could be done.—"Though, faith," continued Gullum, "the evening is a bad time, for the banking houses are all shut up; unless, indeed, you happen to be personally acquainted with any body in this place." A very decent-looking man who was standing in the passage of the White Hart inn, where the coach had put up,

and had overheard part of the conversation, now came forward, and having surveyed our hero with attention, asked what it was he wished to have done, and that if he could accommodate him, he would. Reybridge, upon this, stated to this obliging person his wishes, and the gentleman accordingly requested to look at the bill, which, having carefully examined, he promised to discount for him. "I have," said he, "some knowledge of Major Penrose, and I also know that he has lately remitted a considerable sum of money to the house of Mr. M—— and Co. with whom I am well acquainted, I therefore shall have no objection to discount the bill." Ralph, having expressed his thanks, accompanied the gentleman to his house, where, at his own request, he was furnished with six guineas in cash, and the rest in small bank of England notes. Having carefully secured his treasure in his fob, he returned to the White Hart, and received the congratulations of

Mr. Gullum, on his success. "The gentleman who accommodated you, I understand," said Gullum, "is a Mr. Paterson, a man of immense property, but of a most liberal turn, and has acquired a great deal of money as an army agent." As the travellers were to continue their journey at four o'clock on the morning following, Gullum proposed that they should order an early supper, and retire to bed. This being agreed to by our hero, the cloth was laid, and the remains of some excellent cold boiled beef, and a dish of hashed hare, were placed upon the table, of which repast the hungry travellers partook very plentifully.

After supper, a bottle of Port wine was ordered, during the drinking of which Gullum appeared extremely thoughtful, and upon his companion's asking him, in a jocular way, if he had caught any of Mr. Meteor's fire, that he sat so wrapped up: "No," replied the other laughing, "not so far gone as that, neither; but the

truth is, Sir, now I think of it, it would perhaps have been better for you to have kept your bill till your safe arrival in town, for it never occurred to me, that possibly the transaction between you and Mr. Paterson may have got wind, and some villains in consequence may be at this moment, resolving to way-lay us on the road, and rob us both. Not that I have much to lose, God knows! but your's is too considerable a sum to be trifled with." Poor Reybridge was extremely alarmed by this intimation, and asked the other's advice what was best to be done.

"Pho," replied Gullum, "there is no occasion to consider the matter so seriously; it is only a mere conjecture of mine, and fifty to one if there's any foundation for my fears; but it is as well to provide for the worst that may happen.—I'll tell you what I always do, when travelling with any sum of consequence about me; I sew it between the lining of my coat; and it seldom happens, that a highway-

man has either leisure, or presence of mind, to seek for it there. If you like it, I will secure it for you in this way, as I shall perhaps, be more expert at my needle, having been used to the operation." Ralph willingly gave his consent, and thanked his prudent adviser, who, having called for the proper implements, went to work, and in ten minutes, secured the whole of our hero's property, the loose silver excepted, in such a way as to preclude the possibility of a discovery, without a long and minute search.

After a quarter of an hour's longer conversation, the bottle being emptied, the gentlemen retired to a very neat bed-chamber, where were two beds for their accommodation.

As Ralph had been unaccustomed to the fatigues of travelling, he soon fell into a sound sleep, from which he did not awake, till, by the appearance of the morning, he was convinced it was time to get up; and, indeed, not five minutes

after, that celebrated harbinger of the day, at inns, vulgarly known by the name of *boots*, gave three or four knocks at the door, accompanying them with the information that the coach was getting ready, and that it wouldn't wait a moment for King George himself." Reybridge instantly jumped out of bed, and hastened to communicate the summons he had received to his fellow-traveller,—but the vigilant Mr. Gullum had already taken his departure. Ralph, therefore, hurried on his cloaths as fast as he could, and descended to the kitchen, on entering which, his ears were saluted with the following conversation.—" I tellee what, Will, you and I must part, I do see that. I've been a kind master to you, but I won't be bamboozled in this fashion. What business had you to supply ever so good-looking a gentleman with a horse, without consulting me.—But I do guess your tricks, you dog, I do.—Besides, woolee make me believe didstn't know

gentleman Tim?" "Why, how should I know un? I never seed un in my life." "I believe that's a lie, Will, d'ye see:—because a was tried, not three years back, at our assizes, for a fraud, and only acquitted for want of evidence! But I'll tellee, once for all, if my credit suffers by seeming to harbour a rascal, you shall answer for it."—"Well, I can't help what you do do, but a didn't tell me his name was *Tim,* and coachy says it be *Cullum* or *Gullum,* or some such word."

Reybridge, who had listened attentively to this discourse, no sooner heard the concluding observation, than the blood forsook his cheeks; and now, for the first time, feeling in vain for the notes and cash, which had the night before been so dexterously sewed within the lining of his coat; the full extent of his misfortune rushed at once upon his mind, and clasping his hands in agony, he exclaimed—"Gracious heaven! where will my misfortunes end?—wretched, abandoned, in-

human villain!" Whilst our poor hero stood ready to sink under the weight of this new and irreparable calamity, he was told that the coach waited for him, but he was in no condition to obey the summons, which having been twice repeated the vehicle drove off and left him to his fate.

By this time, the landlord had dismissed his ostler, and hearing that the young gentleman passenger in the London coach had been left behind, approached, and saluted poor Ralph, rather suspiciously. "And so," said he "you have let the coach go without ye, young un, hey?—you look like a gentleman, too, and I don't say you baint one, but I shall keep a sharp look out after ye, for all that. The young uns be as bad as the old uns every bit." Reybridge made no other reply than by lifting up his hands a second time, exclaiming, "What shall I what can I do, now?" There is an expression in innocence that cannot often be mistaken;

nor was our present landlord of the kind to mistake it; an explanation took place in consequence, and information of the robbery being given before the magistrates, instant orders were issued for pursuing the thief, but it was needless to send to the bank to stop payment of the notes, as Ralph had neglected to take the numbers, and Mr. Paterson had gone out of town two hours before an application to him was thought of.

The next step was to take Will, the ostler, into custody, on suspicion of being an accomplice; but, just as they were about to carry him before the justice, the horse on which Gullum had posted off at two in the morning was brought back by the man that had accompanied him as far as Rumsey, with the following lines, written with a pencil, on a bit of paper, and directed, To the young gentleman passenger.

"Pursuit is in vain, and your cash may save me from ruin. If ever I am able, I

will pay you again, and so farewell! The ostler, and the man who brings this, are innocent."

After some consideration, no further steps were taken against Will; but on the paper brought by the other fellow being shown to the worthy magistrate, who had, in the first instance, granted a warrant for the apprehension of the writer, he [illegible] gave orders for another party of constables to proceed to Poole, as it was his opinion the villain might mean to escape the hands of justice by sea.

These active measures having been taken, our disconsolate hero returned to the White Hart, where the landlord, who was really a humane man, endeavoured to comfort him by saying, that he had little doubt but that the notes at least, would be forthcoming. "Good God!" cried Reybridge, "if you had heard this man converse all the way from Plymouth!" —"Aye, aye," replied mine honest host, "let gentleman Tim alone for palaver.

You must know, Sir, that this very man is the bastard of a noble peer of our realm, whose estate lies not a thousand miles from this very town. After geeing un a tolerable good edecation, as I have heard, and sending un to one of the universities *at college*, where he learned all the perlite arts, such as whoring, drinking, gaming, Latin and Greek, Mr. *Belle's Letters*, and such like, the young gentleman came to Lunnun in hopes of being set up by his father, but my lord turned un adrift, by reason that he had already paid many large debts for un; moreover saying that he had geed un a good edecation, and that a ought to shift for himself. And efackings a did shift for himself, sure enough, for a turned swindler, by which profession I be told he has picked up a pretty round sum, and, as you say, Sir, has the gift of the gab as well as any man in Christendom."

Ralph now retired, with a heavy heart, to his room, and consulting his pockets,

found that Gullum had generously left him his loose silver, but this only amounted to four shillings and six-pence, a sum which was barely sufficient to pay for what he had already had at the inn. After some hesitation, therefore, he determined to inclose Major Penrose's dispatches to Mr. Sefton, together with a letter from himself, stating in as delicate terms as possible, the unpleasant situation to which he was reduced. The packet was accordingly prepared, and put in the post-office. In the mean time no tidings were to be obtained of Mr. Gullum; and, on the third day of our hero's confinement at the inn, he received the following answer to the letter and packet he had addressed to Mr. Sefton.

"TO MR. R. REYBRIDGE.

"Sir,

"This comes to inform you that old Mr. Sefton has been dead these three weeks. Sorry to say died insolvent. Fa-

mily at present at a relation's in Staffordshire. Glad if you will send any other parcels that may be for us, we being sole administrators to the effects of the late Mr. S. We shall take care to give due advice of the death of Mr. Thomas Sefton to the family. As to the other parts of your's cannot speak, being

"Sir,

"Your most obedient servants,

"GREENLIPS, GRUBBER, and Co."

Gripe-Lane,
April 4th, 17—.

This genuine letter of business completed the measure of our hero's mortifications. He felt for the death of his friend's father as for an old acquaintance, and, when he reflected on the circumstance of his having died insolvent, the painful consideration of the widow's and her children's probable distress, naturally followed. His journey to London would now have been checked altogether, had not an old

newspaper attracted his attention, in a column of which he read the following paragraph.

"On Saturday last arrived at his lordlordship's house in Grosvenor Square the Earl of Ardendale and family. Lord Westmore is shortly, we understand, to lead to the altar the rich and beautiful Miss Louisa Leybrook."

As this paper was not a fortnight old, Ralph concluded that the Earl must be still in town, as it was highly probable, from the style of the paragraph, that he had quitted Rothwell Castle, and come to London in order to celebrate the marriage in question. To London, therefore, he was still resolved to go; but, without friends to apply to, and without a farthing in his pocket, how was he to pursue his journey? Whilst deliberating on the course to follow, the good inn-keeper entered his room, and told him, with a long face, that no intelligence could be gained of Gullum, and that the business was for

the present necessarily laid aside. "What then am I to do?" exclaimed Ralph; "I *have* friends, but they are at a great distance. What *can* I do? If I had only a guinea or two to carry me to London; but God's will be done!" Here the tears filled our hero's eyes, and as he reclined, in silent dejection, over a chair, he presented a figure that would have done honour to the chissel of the great Praxitiles himself. Our worthy landlord, though he looked to the main chance as much as his neighbours, was, nevertheless, wonderfully moved by the pathetic complaint he had just heard; and, after a slight struggle between prudence and compassion, thus replied: "Why, young gentleman, this be an ugly affair sure enough, but Tom Tappum, though I say it that should'nt say it, could never yet turn his back on a fellow-creature in distress, and so tell me what money dost want, and shalt ha it."—"My worthy and benevolent friend," replied Reybridge, "greatly affected by this

unexpected kindness, "I cannot accept of your bounty, because I can give you no positive assurance of ever being able to return it."—"Return it or not return it," answered mine host, wholly overcome by this ingenuous confession, "if half a dozen guineas will de e any good, why you shall ha um, and my blessing wi' um into the bargain!" So saying, he hastened out of the room, and notwithstanding the fiend avarice goaded him all the way to his strong box, he returned with the cash. The reader will easily conceive our hero's gratitude on this occasion. He immediately gave the good landlord a written acknowledgment for the money, saying that the time might, perhaps, arrive when he should be able to return so great an obligation fourfold. Mine host then cordially invited the youth to partake of his shoulder of mutton, and onion sauce with him; and it would be injustice to the close of this benevolent landlord's character if we did not declare, that he would not have

bartered the satisfaction that this humble meal afforded him to have provided a dinner for the whole court of aldermen.

As the afternoon was remarkably fine Ralph determined without loss of time, to proceed on his journey in the Exeter coach, if there should be a vacant place. He therefore informed his host of his intention, and at the same time observed that he should like to walk on till the coach overtook him, if his trunk, and a place inside, could be secured for him. This the landlord told him could easily be done, and that there was scarcely any doubt but there would be a vacant place. This arrangement being made, Ralph, after shaking his kind friend heartily by the hand, took his departure in tolerable good spirits.

END OF VOL. II.

T. Gillet, Printer,
Crown-court, Fleet-street, London.